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## A Field Guide to Community Coaching

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# A Field Guide to Community Coaching

Developed by Mary Emery, PhD, Ken Hubbell and Becky Miles-Polka

Published with support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kellogg Action Lab at Fieldstone Alliance, and the Northwest Area Foundation



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Version 1.0, February 2011

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Published with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kellogg Action Lab at Fieldstone Alliance and the Northwest Area Foundation.

Designed and produced by Kristi Hetland.

This monograph emerged from a distillation of the wisdom, insights and experience of a Community of Practice that includes: Barbara Andreozzi, Alan Barefield, Samuel Cargile, Doug Clement, Ken Cohen, John Cooper, Daniel Kahl, Stephanie D'Adamo, Susan Fowler, Tony Genia, Harry Goldman, Kenneth Gonzalez, Jennifer Henderson, Jody Horntvedt, Doreen Hauser-Lindstrom, Debra Kollock, Paul Lachapelle, Carol Lincoln, Ben Lindekugel, Byron McClenney, Freeman McKindra, Becky Miles-Polka, Cynthia Pilcher, Barbara Radke, Claudette Romious, Ursula Roosen-Runge, Karma Ruder, Sam Scott, Lee Smith, Frank Taylor, Kay Lynn Tettleton, Dianne Williams, Joyce Williams and Barbara Wyckoff-Baird.

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**Key words:** poverty reduction, community capacity, community change







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# Introduction

The field of community coaching is alive with possibilities and opportunities!

Ken Cohen, a former Horizons coach in Idaho, defines community coaching as, “an adaptive process tailored to unique community contexts to guide systemic change via participant empowerment.” A simpler definition used by many is “a community coach is a guide who supports communities and organizations in identifying and achieving their goals.”

This field guide to coaching provides an introduction to both the concept and the practice of coaching for community change, along with tips, tales and tools designed to assist practitioners in successfully integrating coaching into their work. The guide has benefited from contributions from many coaches working in a variety of coaching settings as well as funders of coaching work. We are very grateful to them for their willingness to share their successes as well as their advice and resources.

## How the Field Guide Evolved

*The Field Guide to Community Coaching* is an expanded version of *An Introduction to Coaching: Guiding Sustainable Community Change*. We see our work as constantly evolving as the practice matures, so we invite you to join us in this ongoing effort by providing success stories, sharing tips and tools that work well in coaching work, and participating in our community of practice. For more information on how to be a part of this work visit <http://www.communitycoaching.com> or contact Mary Emery at [memery@iastate.edu](mailto:memery@iastate.edu).

*Guiding Sustainable Community Change: An Introduction to Coaching* is one of four publications emerging from the Kellogg Coaching Initiative. Other titles include:

- *Facilitating Successful Change Initiatives: An Intermediary or Delivery Organization's Guide to Coaching for Community Change*
- *Engaging in Sustainable Community Change: A Community Guide to Working with a Coach*
- *Investing in Sustainable Community Change: A Funder's Guide to Coaching for Community Change*

The expansion of *An Introduction to Coaching* to the current *Field Guide to Community Coaching* was funded by the Fieldstone Alliance—Kellogg Action Lab's project to support innovation in the field. The *Field Guide* has been reorganized, and we have added additional tips from the field of coaching. Each chapter also includes stories of how coaching has worked in the field and provides examples of tools coaches have found useful. The tales and tips are included in each chapter and tools are located at the end of the guide.

These publications are the result of three roundtable convenings on the work of coaching in a community change context and the ongoing work of our community of practice. The Boise, Idaho, convening in 2005 brought together coaches, funders and representatives of intermediary organizations to describe and define what coaching is and how it works in a community context, and to outline possible roles for coaches, intermediary organizations and funders. A second convening in San Antonio, Texas, in 2007 included a number of coaches and funders from a variety of community change initiatives and focused on the roles, competencies, skills and insights that make coaches successful in supporting and sustaining community change work. A third, smaller roundtable was held in Boise, Idaho, in May 2010 and focused on evaluating the role of coaching in community change work and describing the impact of the coaching role on the institutions where coaching has been embedded.

Diagram 1. Field Guide to Community Change



## Organization of the Field Guide

This introduction provides an overview of how the field of community coaching has evolved and why community coaching is rapidly becoming an important component of successful community change work. We also address how coaching is different from other approaches to community change. Chapter 1 provides a foundation for our discussion on community coaching and discusses the art and craft of coaching, including principles, skills and competencies needed to succeed as a community coach. We focus on how coaching can add value to existing and emerging community

capacity building efforts. In the second chapter we zero in on what coaches actually do. The third chapter describes what happens in the coaching process and details the work of coaching by focusing on the six Rs—readiness, relationships, reflection, results, reach and resiliency. In Chapter 4, we look at the practice of coaching over time, particularly in regard to how coaches deal with different groups as these groups build their capacity to implement successful community change. In Chapter 5, we look at what contributes to a successful community coaching practice. The sixth chapter addresses the ongoing journey coaches undertake to improve their practice and increase their impact. The final chapter offers some thoughts about the future of coaching.

Each chapter is illustrated with a different part of a tree. Taken together they create a whole, as shown by Diagram 1 on the preceding page.

## Why Coaching?

Coaching is becoming an important component in responding to four key trends in supporting and sustaining successful community change initiatives:

- 1. Rapidly Changing Communities.** The rise of the Information Age has required changes in the practice of community economic development and organizational development. No longer can we rely on the expertise of others to guide us and external resources to support us. Communities, organizations and their leaders must identify and build on their own assets and, at the same time, find ways to expand their ability to learn from one another and from the world around them. Place-based approaches address the unique challenges and opportunities of geography. Change work is often described as emergent: each situation requires its own solution; and generative: our work together creates positive change as we go forward. There is no clear map to the future; we must create it as we live it. Coaching offers communities a way to make use of promising practices and outside expertise by learning how to adapt those practices and knowledge to existing community assets and capacity by integrating local wisdom, and supporting the creation of new ways of seeing and doing.



2. **New Leadership Structures.** Foundations, corporations and agencies have poured millions of dollars into succession planning as boomers retire and organizations restructure around new leadership strategies. Coaches aid people in recognizing the assets of traditional and non-traditional leaders, while at the same time framing the work in ways that lead to the development of new leadership structures that are more fluid, adaptable and engaging.
3. **Increased Emphasis on Impact.** The fields of life coach, executive coach and personal coach are growing as people struggle with ways to achieve their goals and adapt to our rapidly changing world. Similarly, communities and organizations are looking for ways to learn about change, apply what they have learned and reflect on that process. Coaching offers a different approach, one that facilitates leaders' ability to energize and mobilize people around a change agenda, and helps community institutions become learning organizations.
4. **Increased Return on Investment.** More foundations are supporting coaching as a way to increase long-term benefits of community change initiatives. Coaching increases the return on investment in capacity building, leadership development and economic development efforts for outside funders and local investors. The use of a coach can help communities find ways to sustain new leadership, develop new capacities and create economic change.

### **Early Examples of Coaching to Stimulate Community Change: A Historic Perspective**

*"It would not have worked without the coach." Montana community leader*

In our research into the field of coaching applications in a community context, we discovered that the practice dates to the mid-1980s when MDC (<http://www.mdcinc.org/home>), a nonprofit research and development organization in North Carolina, began providing community-based technical assistance as a support intervention to increase the pace and success rates of local communities that were reshaping educational reform across the South.

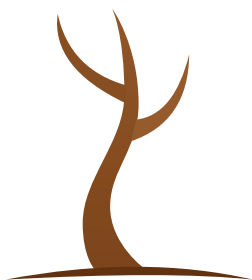
Impressed by the early benefits of using coaching in their work, MDC began incorporating coaching into other change initiatives—reshaping the workforce development system in the Mid South and expanding the capacity of rural community colleges to guide economic and educational reform in highly distressed places. As more community colleges in the South, Midwest and Southwest joined the Rural Community College Initiative, the Southern Rural Development Center and the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development brought Extension specialists into the practice of community coaching. Several major foundations supported early change initiatives using coaches including the Ford Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Lilly Endowment, the Foundation for the Mid South and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

During the next decade, many rural development practitioners and funders, as well as Cooperative Extension faculty and educators, brought a coaching approach to the work of community change. Indeed, since 2000, other foundations have used coaching to expand leadership, education reform and sustainable community development initiatives. Included in the group that have tested the approach are the Northwest Area Foundation (NWAf), the Lumina Foundation for Education and the Duke Endowment. Both the Ford and W. K. Kellogg Foundations continue to support rural development models that draw upon coaching to guide local change efforts.

Initial research for a 2005 coaching roundtable generated a list of more than 220 American communities where coaching had been used as a strategic support tool for organizational development or broad-based community development. In the time since we conducted our initial research we know of several hundred additional communities who have benefitted from the use of a coach. These communities were involved in various initiatives such as Horizons (NWAf), Montana Ventures (NWAf), Reservation Ventures (NWAf), the Rural Community College Initiative (Ford), Tribal and Native Serving Colleges as Catalysts for Rural Development (Lumina), the Mid South Delta Initiative, Kellogg Leadership for Community Change, Achieving the Dream—Community Colleges Count (Lumina), Program for the Rural Carolinas, Community Based Forestry Programs and ongoing community development coaching through Louisiana State University Extension and MDC to universities in Namibia and South Africa.

The success of coaching in sustaining change has led some institutions, such as MDC and the Cooperative Extension services at Montana State University, South Dakota State University, Kansas State University and University of Minnesota, as well as a variety of other nonprofits, to institutionalize coaching as a value-added part of their work. Coaching is being used in some government agencies as a more effective technical assistance strategy. For example, the Iowa Department of Public Health utilizes coaching in community wellness projects and the Iowa Department of Economic Development has coaches working with their Great Places initiative.





## Chapter 1

# The Art and Craft of Coaching Community Change

What exactly is coaching that facilitates community change? Communities, like people, need to grow through their problems. To do so, community members learn to see issues and concerns from a broader perspective as an opportunity to learn from one another and expand their options. The work of a community coach helps people move beyond their stories about why things can't or won't work. By focusing them away from their stuck-in-the-rut stories and replacing those with stories that speak to the strengths and opportunities that abound in any community, the coach can move people out of the negative conversations that keep them from taking action. At a very basic level, successful community coaching moves people from a needs-based approach to an asset or strength-based approach to community work. Coaching for communities means offering an empathetic ear, finding the coachable moments and engaging in joint learning. Coaches do not provide the answers; they support capacity building by helping community members learn from one another and from their own experiences in order to find their own solutions.

Successful coaches focus on outcomes, but not at the expense of process. They are attuned to the need for balance between what to do and how to do it. Community coaches approach their task with the intent to create a ripple effect that will contribute to expanding the capacity of the community to create a thriving future. They strive for the time when the synergy of coaching and

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*The core distinction about coaching is that coaches help unlock what is already present in people and groups and help them frame their own solutions!*

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capacity building becomes part of the community's way of learning together. A primary goal is to see individual capacity gains reflected in those of the team and subsequently in the community. The successful coach models this synergy between individual change and community change by looking forward to new learning from every encounter with the community and the team. Coaches expand their own understanding and their reservoir of resources as they work to increase the capacity of participants and the overall community.

Coaching is both an art and a craft. In this chapter we describe the basic skill set coaches have identified as critical to coaching, the knowledge areas that support the craft of coaching and the key principles that underlie the craft of coaching. Each coach, however, will bring his or her own art to the work. As a result, coaching is not something that one learns solely from books and training experiences, but rather something we nurture and grow as part of our being and doing in the world. Just as each artist is unique, each coach and each coaching situation is unique as a coach finds coachable moments and responds skillfully to community possibilities.

Above all, coaching exists in a social context where relationships are critical. Coaches succeed in communities because of their respect for the implicit wisdom emerging from local people and their belief in human and community agency. Successful coaching requires that all four elements of the equation (funders, intermediaries, coaches and community team members) be in harmony on the goals and the processes involved in the project. As one roundtable participant commented, "there is a need to triangulate between the personality and skills of coach; the personality, skills and assets of the community leaders; and the agenda of the funders."

Successful coaches are deeply committed to the community team. This is an important ingredient in creating a trusting and authentic relationship. A coach must maintain an attitude of appreciation for the gifts, determination and historical baggage community members bring with them into the work. So, the crucial precursor for effective coaching is an ability to link into the team, to listen deeply to the "song beneath the words," and to provide enough empathy to make a commitment to the people who are being coached through a series of changes.

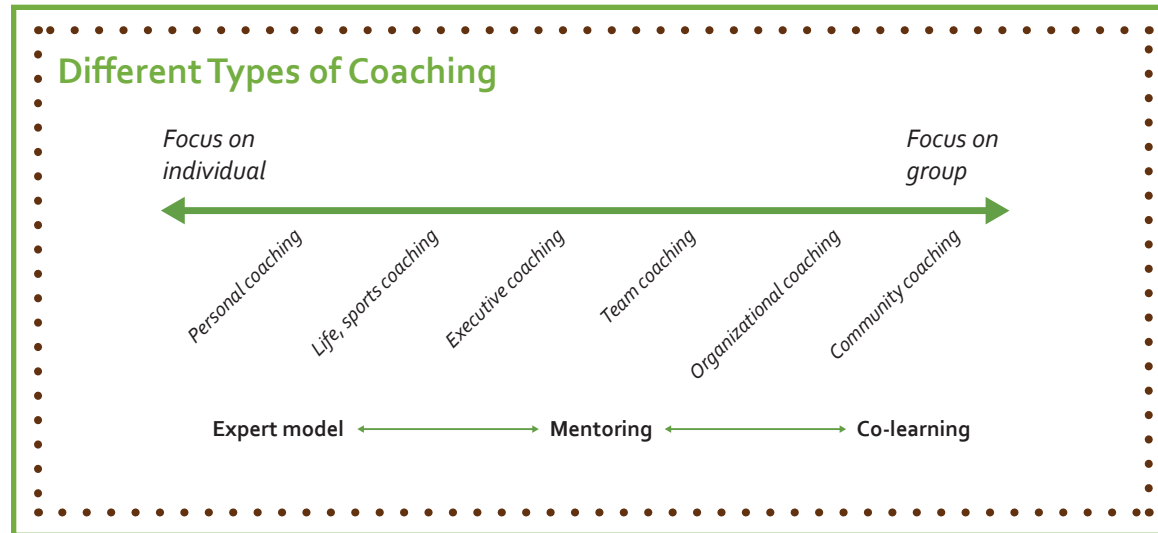
## What is Coaching?

Sometimes it is easier to list what community coaching is not than to say what it is. It is not facilitating, counseling, teaching or providing technical assistance, although the coach may play one of these roles if necessary. These roles are all based on the expert model. Coaching comes from the perspective of co-learning, co-creating and generative collaboration. Often coaches refer to themselves as “the guide on the side.” The coach’s role is not to do things for the community, but rather learn with community members about how to build their capacity to do things more effectively.

## How is Community Coaching Different from Other Types of Coaching?

Coaching is a complex process; it is something we almost all do daily, yet the description and philosophy can be elusive. Today, coaching has become very popular, particularly in the world of

Diagram 2: Continuum of Coaching Approaches



**TIP:** For one coach, spending the time traveling to the community thinking about the coaching opportunities that will likely present themselves helps her be better prepared to seek out and capture those “coachable moments.” She is very systematic about using the Six Rs to think about the community’s progress and its challenges and to consider the best strategies for making the coaching as unobtrusive, yet effective, as possible.



**Tale:** At the roundtables, several coaches talked about how some of their most effective coaching work occurs outside a formal coaching environment. Over lunch and coffee before and after the meetings, they find opportunities to ask provocative questions about the group and its process. For instance, one coach asked a leader who had trouble delegating what it might look like if he spent the next summer with his grandkids. How would the group continue working together? What would the group need to be successful?

business where companies are struggling with maintaining morale and trying to innovate while streamlining and downsizing. The coach is often an external resource who facilitates internal processes or coaches personal growth opportunities. In other examples, the coach is an internal leader who uses coaching as an effective tool for creating teams, setting and achieving stretch goals and nourishing innovation. Diagram 2 on the preceding page shows a continuum from the expert model of coaching often found in sports and business to the co-learning model essential for successful community capacity building.

In community change work the coach is the more an external support person—a person not directly involved in the process but one who has a commitment to its success. From the observer's point of view, the coach helps teams work through issues, monitors processes and offers encouragement.

Community coaching differs from many other coaching models in several ways. We help make explicit the connection or gap between facts, analysis, opinion and judgment. We let the silence work. Community coaches found the following points important in framing their coaching work.

### **Community coaching requires a degree of detachment**

As coaches, we want to think carefully about the questions: What is my role here? What does the group need me to focus on? What does the group need to better understand about its own process and situation? How is the group working? As we work with the group, we want to think of ourselves as outside the group where we can observe both the group's work and our role. Effective coaching requires us to detach from our own agenda and interests and focus complete attention on the dynamic evolving within the group.

### **Community coaching is a reflective activity**

Effective coaches are perpetually in the learning mode. Every coaching event is an opportunity to learn more about ourselves and our work. Effective coaches build in reflection time by keeping journals, working with mentors and/or developing supportive networks among fellow practitioners.



### **Community coaching is catalytic**

Coaching is a valuable nutrient and catalytic agent in any group effort that requires innovative ideas, shared leadership or participation, comprehensive or integrative approaches across sectors. Effective coaching, singular among other strategic approaches, provides the gestalt and enabling environment for collaboration, problem-solving and shared learning for the common good. Coaching is an extremely effective tool for helping groups reframe their operating systems, unleash new ideas, transition to new leadership and negotiate partnerships, critical competencies for any successful community-building effort.

### **Community coaching is not formulaic**

Successful coaches understand, intuitively and concretely, there is no one size fits all, that each community is unique, and that each community must discover and nurture that uniqueness as they build capacity and get things done.

Like other great coaches, good community coaching is intentional coaching rather than accidental—meaning that coaching requires us to consciously step out of other roles to take on the role of coach. As coach, we listen more than we speak; we ask probing questions gracefully. In this role, we don't give answers; we throw requests for opinion and reflection back to the group. We listen hard to grasp the underlying rationale behind the group's conversation.

Communities are seeking change now more than ever, and many are finding coaching to be an effective strategy to aid them in their efforts. Coaching is growing in popularity because of its promising results. Even though coaching initiatives are relatively young, many individuals see this process as life changing and worth the time and effort that it takes to make a long lasting change. Effective community coaching recognizes that every single person has something to contribute, but people often need a catalyst to bring forth the innate wisdom in a group. Coaching can open the door to a transforming process that unlocks wisdom, intuition and insight in groups. Coaches add value to community and the teams' work by:

1. Helping groups see the bigger picture by continually enlarging and clarifying the frame of reference.
2. Identifying, modeling and illuminating collaborative practices and the value of collaboration.
3. Helping teams understand groups that might be potential partners and tying these to the teams' strategic focus.
4. Asking clarifying questions about how opportunities relate to the teams' core purpose and current priorities.
5. Helping the teams see, discuss and determine what is doable at the intersection of projects, resources and budgets.
6. Defining, synthesizing and communicating strategic considerations.
7. Identifying and highlighting key learning opportunities, for example:
  - How to develop or manage a new collective “culture of work and relationships.”
  - How to relate successfully across geography, race, education and income differences or preferences.

## **Levels of Coaching Work**

Coaching can occur at three levels as show in Diagram 3 on the following page. We like to think of it in terms of a journey to a future destination. At the simplest level a coach can help you shape your itinerary and identify resources along the way. At a more complex level, the coach may help identify alternative routes as well as strategies to avoid construction and add to the journey's value. At the level of transformational coaching, the coach and community team may discover new destinations—destinations that fit better with a newly emerging vision of the possible. Transformational coaching helps address the elephants in community living rooms, rise above the ruts that confine local vision and truncate authentic conversation, and create the “a ha” moments when new possibilities appear.

Diagram 3: Three Levels of Community Coaching



Robert Hargrove (1999) identified several related features of what he called “transformational coaching” that describe the soul of coaching in community:

1. Altering the underlying context that shapes, limits, defines the way people think and act.
2. Showing people how to transform or stretch their vision, values, abilities.
3. Helping groups learn how to elicit greater commitment, creativity and flexibility.
4. Unleashing the human spirit and expanding people’s capacity to achieve stretch goals and bring about a real change.

Coaches are always on the search for the *coachable moment* or a *reflection opportunity* when the right question or observation can trigger a new way of seeing and hence a new way of thinking and doing. This is the art of coaching.



**Tale:** Working with a group of tribal college employees planning a strategy to get community input, a coach listened to all the reasons it would be difficult to get the community to attend a meeting at the college. At a pause in the conversation, she asked if they had ever held a meeting that successfully got the community involved. When they responded affirmatively, she asked what was it about that session that made it so successful. The conversation took off in a new direction as staff shared ideas based on the past history of success.

.....  
"It is not sufficient to simply create  
a space; we need to help them know  
their voice is valuable by affirming/  
validating their point(s) of view,"  
—coaching roundtable participant  
.....

Community coaches are likely to respond to a question with another question framed so that the community members can reflect on their own experiences for insight and answers. In this way, communities and teams frame their work as building on the foundation already in place rather than as something new and apart from the community. Many coaches rely on silence as a tool to generate coaching moments. Indeed, in a recent conversation with a community leader in rural Montana, she shared her experience in learning to appreciate silence as part of the group process. The coach helped her and others overcome their frustration with these breaks in the conversation and learn to make the silence work for them.

Coaches rely on good group process skills to generate a safe learning space where dialogue occurs, new concepts are conceived and dissected, and members take time to uncover their own thoughts, fears, lessons and questions. Consequently, some coaching happens in real time in group settings, retreats or during a site visit.

### **Basic Coaching Skills, Competencies and Practices: The Craft of Coaching**

Roundtable participants identified seven key competency areas we felt all coaches should have, including: improving communication, resolving community conflicts, identifying and connecting to resources within and without the community, providing opportunities for individual and collective learning, strengthening relationships and responding to change. All community coaches must also have grounding in cultural competency in order to relate to and engage with diverse people in a community.

Because each phase of coaching requires a different set of skills, we have created a list of those skills often associated with coaching (see Table 1). This list came from the roundtable discussions among coaches, funders and intermediaries. Additional skills are included in two excellent books on coaching that are recommended resources for anyone coaching in a collective effort, *Coaching—Evoking Excellence in Others* by James Flaherty and *Masterful Coaching* by Robert Hargrove.

Table 1. Coaching Skills

Important Coaching Skills	Examples
Communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framing concepts and mindsets so the group can better understand</li> <li>• Framing distinctions</li> <li>• Asking questions</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Engaging in dialogue and discussion for constructive conflict resolution</li> <li>• Providing honest feedback</li> </ul>
Assessment and evaluation skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing reflective practices</li> <li>• Using strength and asset-based approaches</li> <li>• Facilitating asset mapping</li> </ul>
Networking and relationship building skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting groups to other resources</li> <li>• Modeling collaborative approaches to work</li> <li>• Understanding the process for creating true collaboration</li> </ul>
Planning and management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying tasks</li> <li>• Developing timelines</li> </ul>
Engagement and outreach skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding how to create an inclusive planning process</li> <li>• Employing cultural competency</li> </ul>
Facilitation skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nurturing meaningful conversation and collaboration</li> <li>• Managing group conversations</li> <li>• Designing meetings</li> </ul>
Understanding human and group dynamics and group process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting team building</li> <li>• Understanding group interactions</li> </ul>
Conflict management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching people through conflict</li> <li>• Reframing issues</li> <li>• Engaging in dialogue and discussion for constructive conflict resolution</li> </ul>

*"Regardless of the model, coaches need the ability to build trust and be a beacon of hope for the community... they need to be respectful, likeable, humble, consistent... [and] a good listener..."—coaching roundtable discussion*

## Principles of Good Practice

Coaches don't have to know everything. In fact, it is important to know our limitations. Successful coaches do, however, need to have a basic set of competencies and over time need to develop a wide range of skills. During the first two roundtables, considerable attention was given to the competencies that underlie good coaching. Among the knowledge sets participants see as critical are for coaches to operate with a set of principles. Roundtable participants felt that coaching is a principled act and agreed that effective coaches should subscribe to a code of conduct or principles of Good Practice. The following principles of good practice emerged from the roundtables. Participants felt strongly that coaches must be neutral in dealing with the content of the community change work; at the same time we must be vigilant in supporting and integrating good community and democratic processes and values. Successful community coaches practice:

- Balancing doing with being an authentic person.
- Being open and engaged and willing to invest in and practice both the being and doing of coaching.
- Committing to learning—transformational learning and incremental learning—and participating in the work as a co-learner.
- Fostering a culture of respect that encourages listening and learning.
- Fostering mindfulness and regular self-reflection.
- Being willing to put yourself at risk in talking about underlying themes and group stresses—to be willing and able to talk about the elephant in the living room.
- Being willing to say “I don't know,” to look for answers elsewhere and ask for help.
- Avoiding the expert model.
- Recognizing that every voice has value.
- Recognizing that communities have the assets to shape a better future.
- Recognizing that real change requires inclusive participation and engagement, and ensure attention to inclusion, equity and the less-often heard voices.
- Assisting community teams to set compelling, urgent and achievable short-term goals.

- Focusing on process and relationships—not just techniques.
- Building trust.
- Lifting up stewardship and a focus on long-term sustainability.
- Focusing on change and the dynamics and consequences related to change.
- Facilitating opportunities for free and informed choice.
- Offering opportunities for reflection.
- Honoring confidentiality.

In this chapter, we have described coaching as a craft that relies on skills and knowledge in a wide range of community development approaches. Coaches build on these skills and this knowledge as they engage in the work of coaching, through self-reflection and in communication with others engaged in community change work. Together these skills and knowledge allow coaches to craft coachable moments and produce group insights. Each coach brings to the work his or her own history and experiences in unique ways such that no coaching experience is the same. The art of coaching helps experienced coaches create the transformative moments that will lead to generative efforts and breakthroughs critical to the work of community change. In Chapter 3, we will go into more detail of how coaches use these skill sets and principles with the Six Rs framework: coaching for readiness, reach, relationships, results, reflection and resiliency.







## Chapter 2

# What Do Coaches Do?

Often we are asked the question, What DO coaches do? In this chapter we focus on what we have learned from coaches as they describe their work, from community leaders and funders who have worked with coaches, and from the reflections of those involved in coaching at multiple levels. Often we heard comments like, “Our coach is our cheerleader!” or “Our coach is our nudge.” We engaged coaches, funders and intermediaries in a discussion to organize these concrete ideas into nine key coaching tasks that build capacity as they address critical issues.

### Help Groups Get Clarity About Their Work

Often well-intentioned groups gather together with a goal to improve some aspect of their community, and yet they cannot seem to get started. While they may all be using similar language, often these words do not carry the same meaning across the group—group members have diverse mental pictures in their minds even as they participate in planning and implementing activities. These unspoken differences often lead to conflict and group dissolution. Coaches help groups shape the verbal space to engage in conversation that can create common meaning and help community members gain both insight and clarity about their individual roles, their possibilities, their dreams and the critical values that ground their work. Focused on a shared picture of success, they are energized to put their ideas into action.

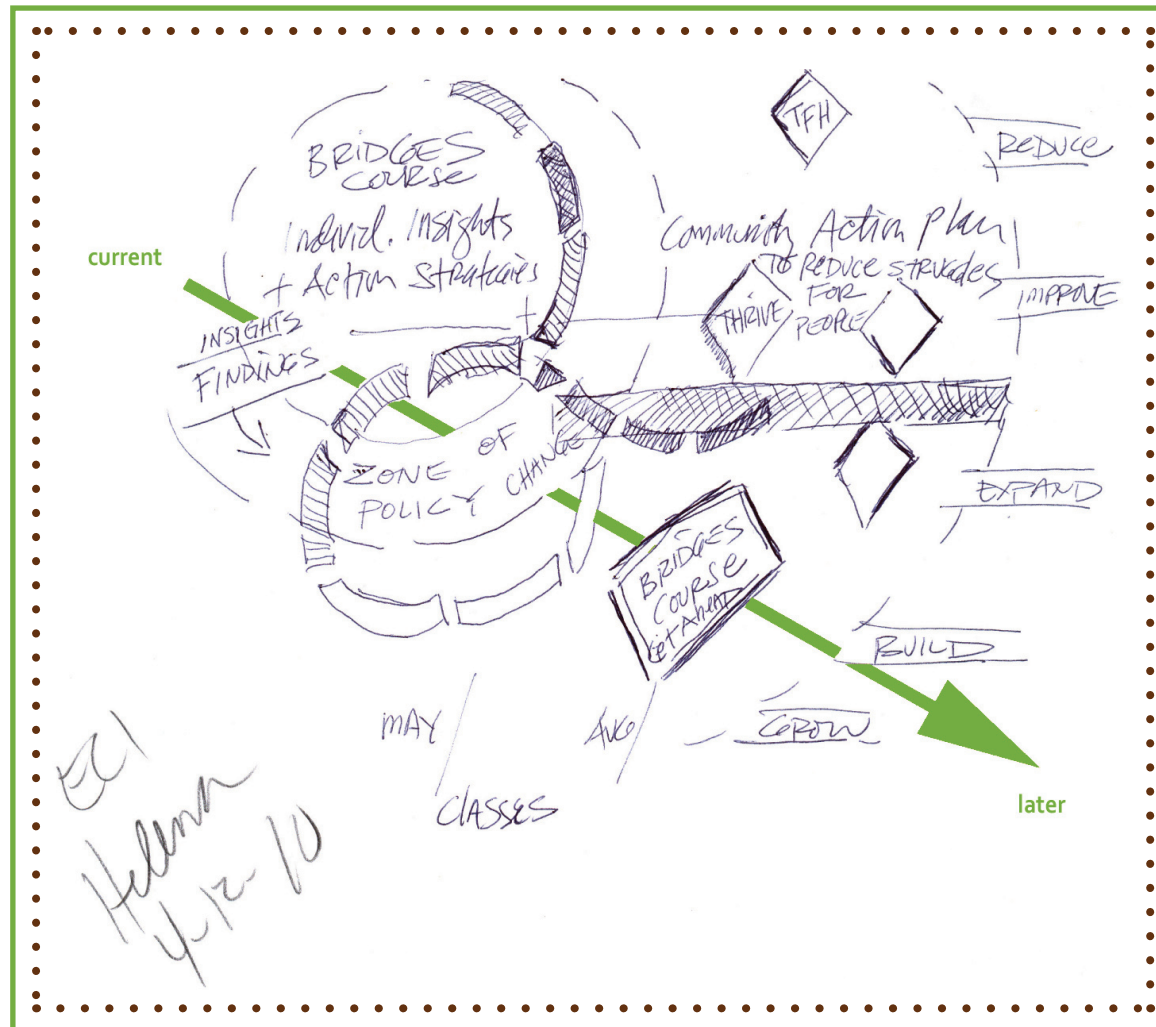


**TIP:** Sometimes the best approach for the coach is to help the group map out a graphic picture of the competing ideas. Using an arrow listing key issues that leads towards a visible end goal or target can help the group achieve clarity and sort through differences.



**Tale:** Working as coaches in an Arkansas community that was working to reduce chronic poverty, Joyce Williams and Ken Hubbell helped the local leaders put their training model into a longer term perspective by doing some quick sketches. This helped the group see that the 12-week course on building bridges out of poverty would likely lead to some local policy barriers, would generate an informal group of up to 40 additional grassroots leaders with a common language and learning tools about altering the pressures of poverty on families, and might stimulate a wider interest in the community about their training. The coaches used the graphic to help the group think more long-term about a sequence of trainings and holistically about the outcomes of its first efforts so they would contribute more positively to wider community efforts on poverty.

Diagram 4. Coach Sketch to Illustrate the Life Cycle of a Community Project



## Help Groups Discover New Options and Breakthroughs

Similarly, high-energy groups with momentum actively engaged in change work can hit a wall because they have not developed clarity about next steps. Coaches can assist these groups with reflexive exercises and reflective questions. Helping the group focus away from the broader change agenda and the complexity of their work, to clearly envision the next small steps, is essential. Coaches can frame questions to help determine the who, what, where, how and why answers that will lead to successful forward movement. While helping groups engage in transformational change is at the crux of effective coaching, coaches also play a key role in helping groups identify new options. Providing examples of existing promising practices, information related to assets and opportunities, and processes for uncovering local wisdom can lead to a more effective and locally owned agenda. Similarly, groups focused on a particular obstacle need help getting back to the bigger picture in order to break out of their rut.

## Provide Tools and Strategies to Help Teams Analyze Situations

Successful coaches conduct situational analyses, including attention to how the coach understands and can address the following elements:

- Degree of readiness to engage in successful community change work.
- Level of candor in the community about issues related to the change effort.
- Communication with funders and within the community about the change effort.
- Purpose as articulated by community members, the funder and the intermediary. Coaches have to ascertain which agendas belong to whom and help the various parties align their agendas for maximum success.
- Transparency—the group has to believe that what they see is what they get with no hidden agenda.
- Situation—what behaviors emerge from the context and how can community members change behaviors as contexts change?



**TIP:** Often communities get caught in negative feedback loops and can't break out of conversations that enumerate all the reasons something won't work, all the examples of past missteps and failures, and all the things that are wrong with the community. Energy for action spirals down as the conversation gets locked into this loop. Helping communities remember and find the positive feedback loops that exist in the community is often key to a coach's work. For one coach, a key guideline is to always start with the positive. Once the negative pops up, people often just fall back into the negative feedback loop. Sometimes when a community has had a great deal of trauma, starting with a recognition of the trauma and the strength the community has shown in addressing it allows people to get past the trauma and focus on the positive. Occasionally, someone in the group will demand to stay in the negative mode. One coach has found success by just asking that person to humor her and try it out for awhile. In one of the most difficult situations, the former naysayer was the champion for the positive approach by the end of the meeting.



**Tale:** One Montana community “hit the wall [and] ran out of gas.” The coach was able to help them renew their energy and commitment by sharing success stories from other communities. “Coaching is the glue to keep it going.”

*Community leader interview*

**Tale:** Outmigration of youth and population decline are difficult concepts to act on. Realizing that the long-term data just made people feel helpless in the face of unstoppable change, a HomeTown Competiveness coach in Nebraska walked the group through a formula that showed them that if they could retain or lure back three young people every year, they could turn that long-term trend around.

This assessment process helps coaches determine where groups require additional capacity before opening the “Pandora’s box of community history and relationships.” To be successful, the coach must have the ability to maintain integrity in the situation. “Integrity of the coach is essential to success.” In addition, the coach must analyze his style and consider how to tailor an approach for different audiences. The tools section of this guide includes a number of assessment models.

## Help Groups Move Through Transactional to Transformational Work

In an earlier chapter, we described transformational coaching—an end goal in all community coaching work. Roundtable discussions focused on teasing out skills and approaches that help a group stretch beyond a previously held view. Coaches succeed by staying aware of the big picture, by asking questions that invite creativity and by nurturing innovation. As coaches develop both their art and their craft they are better able to construct coachable moments that can lead to transformational change.

## Help Groups Make Decisions and Develop Effective Structures

When concerned community members gather to work together, they often have little experience with effective group structure to manage their work and with effective processes with which to make decisions. Often they resort to a hodge-podge of Robert’s Rules with its emphasis on determining winners and losers, or they rely on existing operating practices of the local church or club—neither of which is likely to support successful community change work. If we remember that the writers of our constitution spent a day and half deciding how to work together, we see a critical role for coaches in slowing down the work long enough for people to determine their ground rules for working together and a process for making decisions. Avoiding a winners and losers mentality supports a structure for action and accountability. See the North Carolina example at the end of the chapter for an example of how one coach made the transition to coaching.

## Assist Groups in Sustaining the Work and Leadership

Often community leaders talk about the important role of coaches in helping groups recover from setbacks by reminding them of their assets and successes. Others have commented that their coach helped them keep focused. “It is easy to start chatting and lose focus,” a Montana community leader commented, and the coach helped them stay on track. Working with the group to generate opportunities for success and reflection helps groups build confidence and a sense of agency. Coaches work hard to avoid burnout in leaders who become discouraged or over-committed. They often find themselves working with groups that are dealt setbacks and must regroup, recover, rethink and begin again. In these circumstances coaches remind people of successes, frame learning opportunities and offer words of encouragement. Finally, coaches play a critical role in asking questions about the sustainability and long-term consequences of group decisions. Coaches call attention to emerging leaders and encourage leadership succession planning as critical components of sustainability strategies.

## Provide Support for Nurturing Vision and Supporting Fundamental Values

Coaching involves a sort of stewardship, working toward a positive future for the community. Good coaches listen well and ask good questions. They are respectful of others and attentive to their own processes. Robert Hargrove (1999), in his book *Masterful Coaching*, describes coaches as people who are “vision builders and value shapers.” They focus on the future, not the past, yet they are mindful of the past and its influence on the present. Coaches are attuned to opportunities to empower individual and collective transformation. Coaches assist in fostering and securing communities of commitment and collaboration, so many people share in inventing and nurturing that future. Ultimately, coaches work hard to expand people’s capacity to take effective action and create a desired future state. When asked what coaches do, one community leader responded, “cheerleaders, being a mom—supportive with a bit of authority.”



**TIP:** Sometimes a coach is at a loss of how best to help people better understand data. The “Periodic Table of Visualization Methods” can spark new ideas and approaches, [http://www.visual-literacy.org/periodic\\_table/periodic\\_table.html](http://www.visual-literacy.org/periodic_table/periodic_table.html)

**TIP:** Many coaches are able to craft transforming coaching moments by asking themselves to visualize the rut the group is in, what elements contribute to the sense of being walled in, and what it would look like above the rut. They use the resultant insights to ask questions that can help the group step out of the rut.

**TIP:** In Minnesota, coaches working on the Horizons initiative learned that coaching always has a beginning, a middle and an end. As they did their coaching, this framework helped them focus on what the team needed and also on the fact that, in the long run, the community needs to learn to do things by itself.



**TIP:** Sometimes the simplest questions can have the greatest impact. Often groups get caught up in an either/or argument with good reasons for and against on both sides. Coaches can often break through this stalemate with the question, “Why does it have to be either/or; why can’t it be and/both?”

**TIP:** One coach has developed a rule for herself to keep from jumping into the silence prematurely. She waits until at least four periods of uncomfortable silence occur before intervening to move the group past whatever is causing the silence. She says, “Sometimes it is sheer torture, but when I adhere to this rule, the results are usually very valuable to the group.”

## Ask Thoughtful and Provocative Questions

A community leader in a very rural Western community said their coaches used subtle strategies, “wrote down ideas and asked, is this practical to do? Is it doable? They did an excellent job!”

Asking thoughtful and provocative questions is the meat of coaching work. Coaches use questions to surface both local wisdom and unspoken issues, uncover assumptions and prompt thoughtful planning. Chapter Four goes into detail on the kinds of questions coaches might use at different stages in the group’s work.

## Frame Distinctions

Often coaches reflect back to the group what they are hearing. By framing the distinctions within the conversation, coaches open the way for communities to deal with differences of opinion and areas of uncertainty. Community leaders often comment on the value of having their conversations reflected back to them in ways that help them better understand the issues and to find a way forward.

## Use Silence

We would be amiss without mentioning the importance of silence in coaching. When asked what the coach did to help her group move forward, one Horizons leader commented that at first she got very frustrated with the coach because she would let the silence linger. Now she understands the power of silence in helping groups manage difficult situations. Another community leader said, “they know the answer,” but letting people find it themselves “builds confidence” and “leads to sustainability.” As Jennifer Henderson put it, if you provide an answer, “you steal the learning. It has to be theirs; they have to own it.”



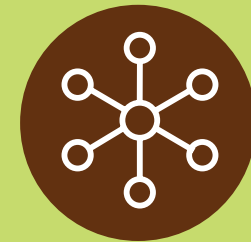
## Provide Reflective and Honest Feedback to the Team: Encourage a Broader Vision, Identify the Stretch Goals to Achieve the Vision, and Lift Up New Behaviors

Coaches often provide regular feedback to the team to help it stay on track, practice new behavior, or engage stakeholders in new ways. These sessions should reflect the coaching agenda agreed to between the team and the coach; these reflection reports should be regular enough to maintain a focus on the challenges and opportunities identified in the coaching agenda. A steady rhythm of feedback helps keep learning on the group's collective mind or radar screen. In addition to reporting on this work, coaches pay attention to the transformative questions and opportunities that can emerge from their observations. Effective questions can lead to breakthrough thinking about new possibilities and creative strategies to move forward. Often, these reflections can help the group think about ways to uncover new learning, deepening their understanding about why their work is important, and how to expand their potential and collective capacity to effect local change.

### How Do Coaches Do Coaching?

Thus far in this chapter we have talked about what coaches *do*. Now, we want to turn briefly to the general *how* do they do it. Coaches do their work in a variety of ways including:

- Telephone, e-mail or in-person meetings with the team leaders, co-chairs, or the executive committee to assist with planning team meetings.
- Attending team meetings as an observer/guide. Often coaches are called upon to facilitate team meetings which we would argue detracts from the coach's key purpose and focus. In these circumstances, coaches often agree to coach the facilitation as a way to build group capacity to manage its own work.
- Participating in person or by phone or e-mail debriefings of sessions with team leaders, co-chairs, or the executive committee.
- Participating in joint meeting with teams, funders and intermediaries to facilitate effective communication across the groups.



**Tale:** For one coach working with an evaluation team in Alaska, the transforming coaching event for the team was to see what happens to a conversation about impact when village people were asked to tell stories about how things are different because they had a health aid to help people with medical problems. Not only did the tenor of the session move away from all the things that are wrong in the village, but people's enthusiasm for the program and for sharing their knowledge was energized. The resulting conversation helped the evaluators learn about the true impact of the program and its value to the village.

**Tale:** The Minnesota coaches use a type of memorandum of agreement with the community teams to help them set up a structure for communicating across teams, for decision making, and for evaluation.

**Tale:** Initially, the coach was asked to help revise a meeting agenda as previous meetings had not gone well. Listening to the

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discussion, the coach thought that more than just an agenda needed to be revised. Meetings are typically unsuccessful when there are unaddressed critical issues in the project. Using questions that helped them share their ideas of what it would look like if the meeting was very successful got them thinking that some of the issues needed another venue. As the coach worked with them on identifying the best outcome they could have and the steps to get there, the group experienced long periods of silence in response to probing questions about how they see things working and how they would address barriers. After the fifth very long silence, one member of the group advanced the idea that they needed to redesign the project. Once that idea was on the table, the group quickly agreed and came up with enthusiastic great ideas for the next steps to take them forward. At the end of the meeting, one participant turned to a colleague to ask what she was doing here, referring to the coach. Some of the most successful coaching experiences are often quite subtle to those new to the process.

- One-on-one coaching with key leaders.
- Providing regular feedback that facilitates reflection, refocusing and celebration of the group's recent work. The coach might produce a monthly or quarterly memo to the team or the team leader that includes the coach's perspective about the team's progress, key questions for the group to consider and provocative propositions. An example that was used with a community college team in eastern Kentucky that participated in the Ford Foundation's Rural Community College Initiative:

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### This tale from RCCI describes the feedback a coach provided to their team

I'm very proud of your determination to push through all the frustration and delays in your RCCI project that could have grounded a lesser group. I think you have the foundation for great success in your twin goals of building innovative regional development networks.

I hope you continue throughout 2002 to build on the recent momentum, using your remaining Ford Foundation funds to launch meaningful educational access pilot programs and serious workforce development strategies. If you do, I think the region's stakeholders will help PRCC do the heavy lifting that will be required to sustain this work.

### Current Strengths

- Growing out of an organic planning process, the College and key partners across all three sectors (public, private and nonprofit) forged a promising regional economic alliance. This alliance has great promise for working regionally on development opportunities; especially noteworthy is the commitment to the alliance of up to seven bank partners and five county judges.



- The college used an extensive regional planning process to create a wide network of 30 education stakeholders involving numerous local school systems among others. While their implementation projects stalled out in 2001 due to lack of a committed champion, the network is in place and these new relationships provide a strong asset for future efforts.

## Continuing Challenges

Your challenge or “stretch” goal is to think bigger about regional development than ever before and to target investments in highly skilled trainers, custom technical assistance staff and innovative entrepreneurial leadership way. If the region continues to under invest in regional development, you probably won’t be able to get the traction and momentum necessary to break free of the old limited-resource view that defined the region’s economic reality. I believe you can make this transformation.



One coach commented that “sometimes there are way more issues in a community than a coach can handle...coaches need to approach their work with humility...there needs to be sensitivity to when you can push and when you have to take a different approach.” Initiating the coaching relationship takes negotiation, “some people could do it and some people couldn’t; some communities could handle it, some not.”

Coaches do many things; they need to be quick on their feet to respond immediately to what is happening in the community and with the leadership team. We have included a coaching tale from North Carolina (p. 30), as well as an excerpt on coaching from *Your Field Guide to Community Building*, published by the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, <http://www.heartlandcenter.info> (p. 32). In the following chapters we will provide more detail on how coaches use their skills, knowledge and principles to support successful and sustainable community change work.



### TIP: The 1000 Mile Journey

This activity was introduced to people by Jim Long (WSU) and has been used in a variety of settings. Develop a flip chart that starts with “o” in the lower left hand corner. Draw a wiggly line with several dips and points to the top right hand of the chart and label this as “1,000.” Engage the group by asking, “If our work together is a 1,000 mile journey, where on the map would you put us and why?” Often, coaches will suggest that people share examples of success with each other prior to the activity, so everyone is thinking about what is working and why. Based on the chart, the group can take stock of what they are doing, what they learn from their successes and what strategies they might employ to increase their success.



## Tale from North Carolina

Submission for *Field Guide to Community Building*

From Susan J Fowler

### Creating Continuity

When I made the transition from consulting/coaching in organizations to coaching community groups, I learned the importance of helping create continuity for the group. Most community groups are composed partially or primarily of volunteers, and the composition of the group can change dramatically from one meeting to the next, not to mention over the course of several years. When I began coaching the Town of Candor as a part of the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center's NC STEP (Small Town Economic Prosperity) project, I soon realized that new people would be showing up all the time, and that we needed a way to quickly orient them to the work and to the agreements the group had already made. We developed the following "Guiding Framework" that we could hand to new members. The Town also had it made into a big laminated poster that stayed on the wall in the meeting room. In addition, I developed a visual 'map' of the major steps in the whole process.

#### Town of Candor NC-STEP Guiding Framework

#### DESIRED AND REQUIRED OUTCOMES OF THE PLANNING PHASE OF NC STEP (As defined by the Rural Center)

1. A diverse, engaged community leadership team with the commitment and skills to continue the work of community economic development beyond the NC STEP program.
2. A written 'community assessment'
3. A plan that:
  - A. Defines economic development strategies for Candor
  - B. Defines specific initiatives and how they will be implemented

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC PLAN** (According to planning 'experts')

An effective strategic plan emerges from:

- Shared understanding of the current reality (internal and external)
- A shared vision of the preferred future
- Shared commitment to the first steps from the current reality toward the vision
- Shared commitment to learning and accountability

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD PLAN** (Listed by Candor's Leadership Team)

1. Input from a wide variety of people – from different cultures
2. Team members have specific roles for implementation
3. Feasible
4. Takes history of what works and doesn't work into account
5. Comprehensive and detailed
6. Strategic
7. Long term
8. Benefits entire community and has broad support
9. Ties business and community together
10. Financial sustainability – present and future
11. Includes education of partners (e.g. building owners, residents, etc.)

## **MEETING GUIDELINES**

- Start and stop on time
- Listen to learn
- "Seek first to understand"
- Speak your own truth
- Balance participation
- Agree to disagree (respectfully)
- It's OK to put matters of race, ethnicity and class on the table





## Coaching Helps Community Teams Overcome Barriers to Change

Excerpt from *Field Guide to Community Coaching*

Communities engaged in change work face many challenges. Often they see a brick wall between where they are and where they want to be and have no tools to scale it, climb it, or break through it. Coaches work with these groups to uncover existing community experience and wisdom about breaking down walls, and to find ways to apply such knowledge in the current situation.

### Getting the Group Out of a Rut

How often have we found ourselves in a meeting where everyone has all the reasons why things won't work; why the community won't change; or why nobody really cares? Most interventions in these conversations can end up as an invitation to an even gloomier round of negative reasoning as people fire off all the reasons the suggested approach will not work. Groups like these are stuck dead center in a rut of negativity. Often this narrative has become the dominant community story told over coffee and in every meeting again and again. Each potential solution leads back to the refrain of nobody cares or we tried that before or... These discussions loop around back to the starting point and always end with everyone firmly fixed in the rut. These circumstances often require some sort of coaching to break free.

- Look for ways to reframe the situation – “we can’t get anything done because nothing gets done” - to a different picture. The conversation could be reframed by discussing the normal curve of adopting new practices or adapting to new conditions. Mention that adopting change, like other human characteristics such as height and weight, are characteristic of people that fit on a normal curve: few very short people at one extreme end of the curve; few very tall people at the other extreme end of the curve. Some short people; some tall people toward the ends of curves and most people in the middle. Similarly, with relation to change, the curve tells us at the extreme ends we have the innovators who always want to do something new and those who will never change. Next in the curve, on one end we have early adopters who will take advantage of a good idea when they see it, and, on the other end, those who will change kicking and screaming along the way. In the middle are those of us who go along with change once it has a proven record.
- Help the group change their mental picture of the situation - when groups are caught in the rut of negativity because they can’t see how something can be accomplished, they often have a mental picture of the people at the extreme end of the curve on the “won’t ever change no how” end.

- Craft an “a ha” or “teachable moment” - what happens to the possibilities for action, when we concentrate on the people at the innovator, early adopter end of the curve? Often this new way of looking at the problem can result in a dramatic “ah ha” moment. People can often see do-able actions when they focus on the right group.

### **Moving from Discussion to Action**

Many groups and communities are pegged with a no-go label. Well-intentioned people struggle to find effective ways to help their community or group improve with lots of enthusiastic discussion and idea generation that goes nowhere. Coaches can help by:

- Observing and understanding group behavior – For example a coach listening to a group talk about all the good reasons to do something might interject a comment to the effect that “we seem to all agree on the need to do something.” This comment will test the appearance of consensus, and if consensus exists, focus attention on what needs to happen next.
- Assisting others in setting compelling goals – Coaches can help the group move from general discussion to what needs to happen to make changes or implement good ideas by asking questions such as, “what has to happen first to move forward?” “How will you know you are successful?”

### **Attending to Cultural Competency**

The coach’s role as an outsider provides a useful vantage point from which to observe and provide feedback on issues related to diversity and cultural competency by:

- Helping the group listen to one another – Coaches can remind the group of minority concerns or suggestions when those ideas get lost in the general discussion.
- Transforming unproductive discussion to generate collaborative conversations – Coaches can restate the minority opinion when it is over looked, or ask the group how to respond to different perspectives or problems that emerge from different contexts.
- Facilitating active participation – Coaches can empower missing voices by asking for input from those who are often not heard.
- Reflecting group behavior – Coaches may reflect back to the group observations of how they see the group reacting to new and/or different voices.
- Reminding the group of the minority position – Sometimes a minority position is stated that does not click with accepted dogma. Coaches can remind the group of those statements and the group’s desire to take minority voices seriously. Sometimes the group needs to be reminded several times. Providing an opportunity to help the group think about how they hear these voices, but may not listen or attend to them, helps identify ways to improve their group practice.

## Fostering Inclusiveness

Often the major players in communities and groups can get very enthusiastic about projects and programs and take silence for agreement. Coaches can help address the need to understand the true meaning of that silence by:

- Asking who is missing – Coaches can ask questions about what groups or individuals might be impacted by the project and program and how they are represented in the process.
- Providing alternatives to Group Think – Coaches can suggest group discussion and decision making and discussion strategies that allow less active members an opportunity to participate in a non threatening manner, such a small group work, nominal decision making, paper ballots, etc.
- Encouraging participation – Some of the best coaching occurs outside the meeting where coaches can support participation by reinforcing the value of people's ideas and suggestions, empowering people to engage in group conversations and giving constructive feedback.





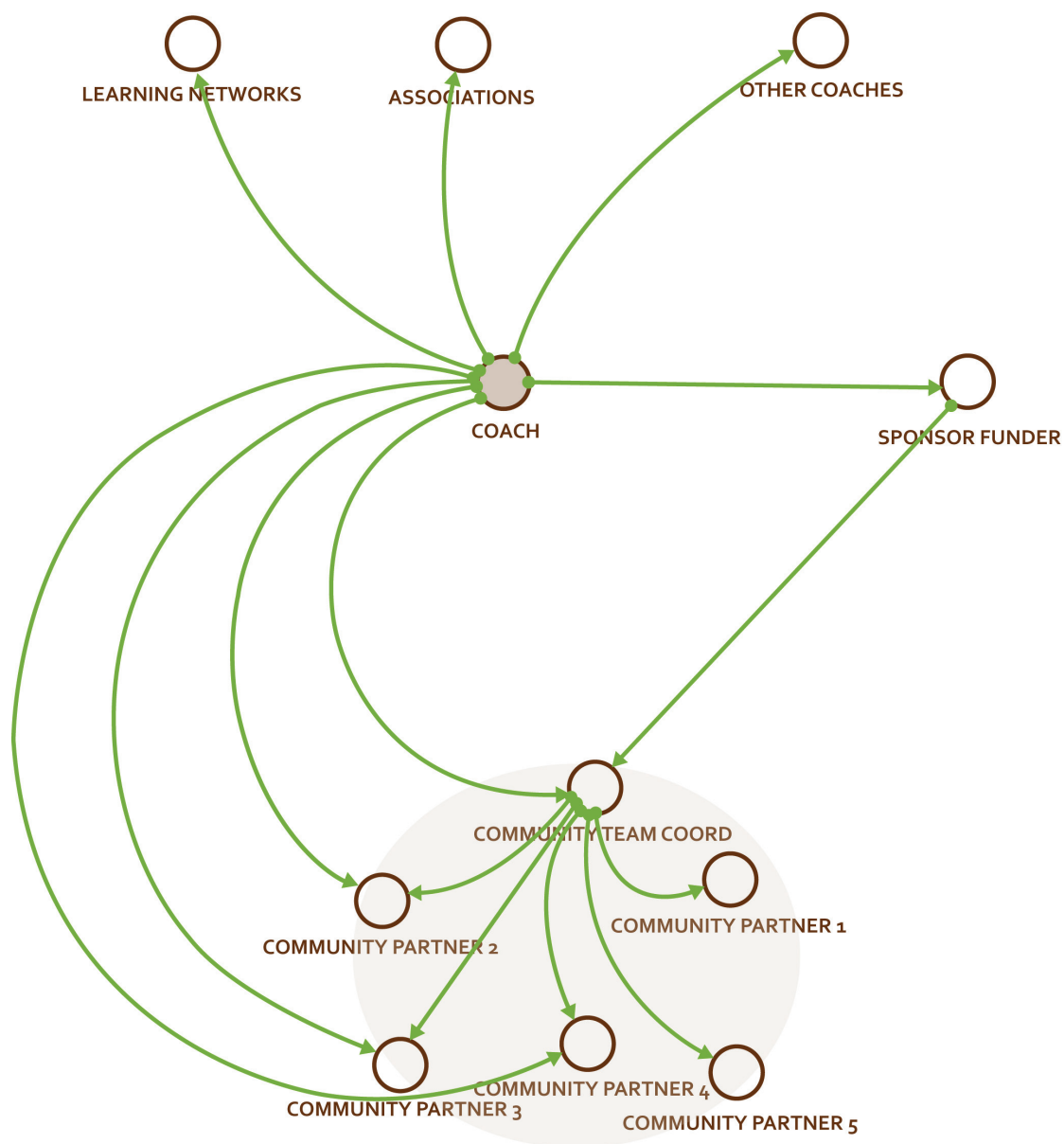
## Chapter 3

# What Happens in Community Coaching?

Coaches usually come to communities or groups in one of three ways: as part of a foundation-supported change initiative, through an intermediary receiving grant support to manage a technical assistance or capacity building program that involves coaching, or because a community group determines there is a need for a coach and secures a coach for their efforts. Coaches also work with a variety of issues, projects and strategies.

Regardless of how the community coaching relationship was initiated, the coach soon encounters the diverse ecosystem in which the coaching work will unfold. This complex environment is a living system shaped by interactions among many stakeholders. Typically, the coach has intensive connections with a coordinating team and a lead staff member. During the engagement, coaches may interact with other community stakeholders and agencies as they participate in the change effort. The diagram on page 36 illustrates the way a coach may participate—providing feedback, support and encouragement as well as acknowledging the need for different kinds of perspectives, questions and celebrations among the many stakeholders. In this chapter we describe the settings and relationships in which coaching takes place. We also introduce a conceptual framework, the Six Rs of Coaching, as a way of helping coaches make sense of the complexity in which they work.

Diagram 5. The Coach-Community Ecosystem





## Coaches Engage in Multiple Relationships

Coaching works best when community stakeholders see their work with a coach as an opportunity to help achieve local goals and ambitions. Thus, a first challenge for the coach in a funder-supported effort is to build a bridge with the community between funder expectations and community plans and processes.

As the coach learns about the situation in which the coaching will occur, many questions can arise. What can the coach do to ensure a fit between his/her skills and the community or team? How does the coach know if his/her skills fit the program/community? These and other questions emerge as coaches consider how best to frame their approach to the engagement. Roundtable participants suggested several strategies that can help coaches prepare for their coaching assignment.

From an external point of view, coaches can get to know the key people with whom they are working and can learn about the community's issues and patterns of work in order to consider how best to approach the coaching opportunity. As coaches learn about community expectations and existing capacities and strengths, they can design strategies to help communities understand, frame and shape the ever-changing economic and social conditions that impact everyone. A second piece of the external preparation requires the coach to work carefully with funders or sponsors to encourage trust in the coaching process and to identify realistic expectations. Coaches often work with intermediaries to access resources for facilitating a successful coaching experience for the community.

Intermediary organizations managing an initiative that relies on coaching face a steep learning curve in regard to coaching for community change. One of the most important steps in forming a coaching relationship is for the community and coach to clarify expectations regarding the services the coach will provide. Issues for clarification should include the level of feedback, onsite coach participation and the kinds of expertise the coach should offer. Whatever the source of funds for coaching services, a written contract between the coach and community or group provides an opportunity to discuss, clarify and document expectations (see the example at the end of the chapter).



**TIP:** One coach described her work as coaching the team leader(s) before and after each meeting on agenda items and managing the group process. During the meeting, she coaches the group on their approach to their work and how they work together.



(Freeman McKindra, who has coached the Lee County (AR) Revitalization Project in the Mississippi Delta for two years, provides this summative review of how the Six Rs were involved in his work.)

### Ways in Which the Six Rs of Community Coaching are Manifesting in Your Work

(Readiness+ Relationships+ Reflection+ Results+ Reach+ Resilience = Transformative Change)

**Readiness, Reflections, Relationships, Reach** and **Results** are the most important at this of the initiative. **Readiness** shows up as the band of supportive partners continue to expand. The continued work shows that they are ready to challenge the difficult issues, whether individuals or institutions. **Relationships** with a broad array of collaborators and partners continue to open doors for the initiative to access resources to continue and expand the work needed to reach the objectives of the effort. It is relationships with partners outside of the area that has provided the energy to go forward. **Reflections** have

## Coaches Work on a Variety of Issues

As noted previously, a coach can assist an organization, coalition, agency or an informal grassroots group through a change process aimed at improving the community. While coaching can occasionally be short term, most community coaching engagements occur over a longer period of time. Creating new possibilities and relationships is complex and requires a long-term perspective. Coaching has been, and is being used in, community health, conservation efforts, community college outreach, poverty reduction programs and other situations. Regardless of the focus, the coaching process addresses the underlying need for capacity building, reflection and co-learning. As Adam Kahane (2010), a well known author on collective approaches to change might say, coaches help create the container in which community change work can flourish.

## A Framework for Coaching in Community: Six Rs

In the previous chapters we have listed the skills, areas of knowledge, principles and practices associated with community coaching. We have described different settings, situations and phases that impact the coaching role. As our roundtable groups looked at the variety of lists and conditions, we needed a way to make sense of it all. The Community Coaching Initiative brought together a very diverse group of coaches and others involved in coaching work to form a community of interest to gather the best practices for coaching in a community context. This gathering enabled us to create a conceptual framework that organized the work coaches do to help leaders transform themselves and their communities. We have distilled this emerging coaching approach into a basic framework called “The Six Rs of Community Coaching.” The framework helps coaches identify the key elements or ‘R’ in coaching situations and design appropriate coaching strategies to address that ‘R.’ Since community settings always have all the ‘Rs’ present, identifying the one aspect that needs to be addressed first—that crucial ‘R’—is critical to effective coaching.

The first version of this concept was developed in the Mississippi Delta by several practitioners who were providing intense community coaching for the W. K. Kellogg Foundation’s Mid South Delta

Diagram 6: The Six Rs of Community Coaching



Initiative (MSDI). It was later expanded into the current model in convenings with coaches who brought a wide variety of coaching experiences to the conversation about what is coaching and how it works. This section includes examples and brief case summaries of how some of these tools were used. Readiness, Relationships, Reflection, Results, Reach and Resilience are all important and interrelated aspects of effective community coaching (see Diagram 6).

The Six Rs framework encompasses all aspects of a successful coaching experience, from preparing a community for the challenges ahead to testing the resilience of the community as the coaching effort nears completion. **Readiness** begins with an assessment of assets and reflections on past community building efforts. Coaches working with communities around readiness assist

become a tool that is engaged in the development of all new programs and or services. A review of past efforts and the challenges they faced, provides a measure of consolation to those on the front line trying to move major initiatives. The focus includes **Results** because of the need to report to all sectors of the population about the value added available to the community and its citizens. The results reported in all instances do not identify progress. In some recent cases the results shows how institutions can block the accusation of needed development resources. In addition to the four listed above, **Reach** is important to consider in that the initiative is moving into new territory for small towns and rural communities. It is clear that the initiative must reach past local interest to achieve the measure of successes that the plan calls for. The LCRP is asking institutions and service organizations—local, regional and national—to engage in more collaborative work for the good of the county. There are county institutions that are struggling to hold the status quo as the population and services continue to decline. The LCRC initiative is reaching across many traditional and nontraditional lines and must do so to be effective in this environment of limited resources. As stated before, because so many residents have left the county over the last 70 years, there has to be a level of **Resilience** in order for the county to have survived. However, a lot of development must occur at the human and physical level before there can be measurable **Transformative Change** in a positive direction for this county.

in generating an extended list of networks, assets and community attributes that can support the community in reaching its goals. After this step is accomplished, the coach may take the participating individuals on a journey of exploration into what is possible.

As community leaders begin to organize around their goals, they must consider how they will work together by expanding and strengthening **Relationships**, both personal and professional. Coaching around relationships strengthens the capacity for collaboration and collective action as leaders create new approaches and strategies.

Coaches also provide opportunities for **Reflection**, allowing leaders to celebrate their accomplishments and discover ways of improving relationships, decision-making processes and other aspects of their work together.

Successful community change succeeds by generating consistent **Results**. Coaches assist groups in putting measures in place so that a continuous glimpse into what is working and what is not will steer the group toward achieving their milestones. Individuals have to believe in their own specific purpose and understand the meaning behind their work in order to fully expand their view of the possible and commit to that effort.

To **Reach** beyond what one may believe possible is to fully embrace the process and the possibility of transformative change. Coaches help individuals and groups through experiential exercises so they can reach beyond current thinking and strategies. Coaching also helps groups reach out into the community, leading to greater age, economic and racial diversity in the change effort.

Finally, coaches help leaders move toward **Resilience** by encouraging reflective practice and the skills to coach each other so that community groups and their leaders can find answers within themselves. These answers come from considering a deeper set of questions, framed and answered individually and within the group on a regular basis. The resulting new innovations and emerging best practices will propel the team and community forward faster!

## Coaching for Readiness

Readiness is often a blend of individual, group and community level acceptance of the necessity for new ideas, behaviors and coalitions to emerge in order to energize community change. Readiness for coaching begins with a personal decision to undertake a new process of self-development. Whether we are speaking of a one-on-one coaching relationship or a community project which involves a group of people seeking guidance, the openness and willingness begins with the self. This step is very important because it will be difficult to find common ground or the openness to coaching if readiness is not addressed in the beginning. As one coach commented, “Communities need to understand how the process works and how it is different from what has happened in the past.”

There are specific things that ensure readiness. How would we, as coaches, help a community assess or get ready for coaching or take advantage of coaching? We could:

- Have a pre-readiness conversation about current assets and the local history.
- Have a full discussion on the Six Rs to get clarity in each area.
- Lay out possible roles for coaching engagement.
- Invite individuals to share concerns and talk in length about them.
- Assess the openness to sharing and learning together.
- Focus on the discovery and appreciation of local assets.
- Understand the spirit for collaboration: Are the local groups connected and do they trust each other?
- Fill out quick surveys to assess the need for a community coach.
- Determine if there is a committed coordinator or leadership group to guide community building and if the group agreed to collaborate with a coach to advance its work. What would be the best way to make the arrangement operational?
- Ascertain if the group has the capacity to organize, share and develop new approaches to improve the community and to determine how best to move forward. What assets are in



**TIP:** Often community leaders need some help in identifying how the coach could best contribute to their work. Using *Engaging in Sustainable Community Change: A Community Guide to Working with a Coach*, <http://www.communitycoaching.com>, can help them get a better idea of what coaching can do for them. By encouraging them to use the assessment tool in the guide, the coach can discover some excellent starting points. As with many community efforts, however, working with the community on one issue often uncovers more serious issues that the community, in many cases, has avoided dealing with.



**TALE:** Antoinette Green began work with the Mid-South Delta Initiative as a coordinator of one of the community teams funded by Kellogg. Antoinette was involved in a coaching experience she described as “unique and good for the community.” Coaches came in and set up listening sessions. The point of these sessions was to hear the voice of the community and receive feedback from enough participants so that everyone was comfortable with understanding the diversity of perspectives in the room. This beginning process was evidence of her coach’s motto, “Helping People Help Themselves.”

place and what will the members and the group need to strengthen?

- Are the majority of the members of the coordinating group open and serious in seeking new and lasting solutions to their community’s issues? If so, what is driving their interest in coaching?
- Engage the community in asset mapping using the Community Capitals Framework (see tools).
- Engage the community in an Appreciative Inquiry conversation about what is great about the community and what elements contribute to the greatness.

The Tools Section includes a readiness assessment developed by coaches. Working with the community on a readiness assessment can be the most important first step to achieving successful community coaching outcomes. This approach lays the groundwork for the hard work ahead. This beginning phase also allows everyone to become more clear about the ultimate goal(s) ahead that might not be anywhere in sight.

## Coaching for Relationships

Relationships are the foundation of any successful coaching experience, no matter what type of coaching is taking place. Coaching for relationships includes insights into how the community can expand its social capital, foster collaboration across silos, enhance networking and include evaluation. Successful coaches also have tools to foster inclusion and boundary spanning. It is not sufficient to simply create a space; coaches need to help community members know their voice is valuable by affirming/validating their point. Important questions groups should address in working with a coach in order to lay the foundation for a successful community coaching process include:

- How are people connected to each other and to the leadership group/team?
- How is this group connected to the broader community?
- What are people’s assets, what can they build together and how will they work successfully?



- What kind of leadership is possible?
- Is there a spirit of cooperation and a commitment to some basic operating principles among the coordinating group? Has the group devised effective ways to work together that provide for a variety of roles to share leadership?
- Is the group in good relation to its community—is it representative, linked and accountable, and what assistance would it need from the coach?
- What kind of relationship will the coach likely have with individuals, selected leaders, the coordinating group and its community partners?

Relationships are at the core of coaching. Initial coaching work in this ‘R’ begins building trust and confidence among the individuals and opens the discussion for new arenas of possibility.

### Successful Coaching for Relationships

The most successful stories about coaching for relationships centered around helping the team to become more inclusive and to recruit, welcome and involve people from throughout the community. The work of creating relationships that cross boundaries, many codified in decades of tradition, revolves around helping people listen to one another and to seek common ground. Coaching that goes beyond this stage helps participants create sustainable bonding and bridging social capital, the connections people have to others, and norms of reciprocity and trust that shape those relationships. Success in this ‘R’ leads to communities creating new traditions that value multiple customs and cultural practices.

A second aspect of coaching for relationships focuses on helping community members find their voice and helping others listen to and respect that voice. In successful coaching, those who have been disempowered come to the table as equal partners. Many coaches also told stories about bringing the voices of younger people into the community decision-making process.

Successful coaching for relationships addresses the need for communities to build bridging social capital to resources and institutions outside the community. In this context team members can



**TIP:** In disadvantaged communities where both outsiders and insiders are concentrating on what is wrong with the community, it is particularly effective to use Appreciative Inquiry (<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu>) to engage people in sharing stories about great things in the community, what they like best, or when they were most proud of their community. Not only does this process focus on the overlooked strengths of the community, it also demonstrates the importance of every voice in the community with its focus on stories, conversation and inquiry.

**TIP:** Often community members are quick to list all the barriers to successful collaboration and team work. Appreciative Inquiry provides us with a useful way to change the conversation to what can work. Ask the group to pair up and share stories of past successes (the best team, group, collaboration or meeting experience), to comment on what elements contributed to that success, and to dream of what it would look like if we could do even better. The group can use the common elements of success and the dreams to craft successful strategies to move their work forward.



**TALE:** Kellie Chavez Greene, who worked with the Mid-South Delta Initiative, described her role as a coach in bringing a diverse group of people together. This focus on diversity was not limited only to race, but also included welcoming people from different ages, education levels and economic status groups. These individuals were brought together to create a strategic plan for community change in their region. Initially the lack of trust among members created too much tension for the group to succeed in reaching its goals. Creating the foundation for powerful relationships was crucial to the success of the strategic plan that was later developed. The process began with conversations about what each participating individual loved about the community and what was important to them as residents of the Delta. Kelli believed that this process would help participants recognize a common ground of family, faith and the Delta culture that was shared across the group, from the very grassroots person who may not have graduated from high school to a person on staff at the local university. “We built a foundation for our relationships from core values.”

be coached to learn and apply skills related to communicating clearly, cooperating fairly and collaborating successfully. Furthermore, successful coaching for relationships also involves looking for those coaching moments when the right question or comment can help the team find the inspiration they need to pull together and make things happen and, at the same time, learn from one another so the team can continue to inspire one another into the future.

Finally, coaches mentioned that successful coaching for relationships means accessing and supporting the coach’s own network. These coaches find inspiration from sharing stories and strategies for overcoming roadblocks with one another, they look for ways to help each other “work around the detours,” and they participate actively in their coaching network and attend to those relationships.

### **What Coaches Need to Know about Coaching for Relationships**

Again, coaches occupy a bridging role between funders and communities. One funder at the 2005 roundtable commented, “We need to listen to you in your language” not talk to you in one way and communities in another (though discussing the same concepts).

Helping communities create and support relationships is often at the core of the coaching. Almost every roundtable participant talked about how a significant focus of his/her coaching work revolved around helping communities expand both the number and kinds of folks at the table and build new relationships with disenfranchised populations.

### **Coaching for Reflection**

The work of the coach in reflection may include engaging the group in reflection activities or through the use of questions focused on the issue at hand. Reflection activities offer a very rich experience for individuals as they are able to recall things that have worked and things that have not worked in their cause and thus contribute to the ongoing learning of the group. As coaches build group capacity they demonstrate the importance of scheduling time for reflection, so people reflect on the



experience to date and celebrate their progress. Reflection activities include story-telling, giving and receiving feedback, deep listening and facilitating other reflective processes such as reflective walks, journaling and reflecting on the history of the community. This part of the process gives individuals the opportunity to find the answers to their own questions. Reflection processes are powerful in that they require patience and a commitment to let new things bubble up. These processes also allow individuals to create a holding space for deeper dialogue around hard issues. A great way to facilitate this part of the community coaching process is by asking the following questions:

- What worked, what didn't and why? Or what worked and how might we make it work even better?
- What is the broader history of change in our context and how does our current work fit?
- What are the learnings from our work to date and what might need to change?
- What approach to learning and assessment has the group developed? Does it have or need regular methods to step back and reflect on its purpose, mission, goals, partnerships and impacts?
- How does the group collect, share and analyze the wide array of feedback or analysis generated by periodic or annual reflection and what could the coach provide that would spur learning and 'sense making' among the team?
- To what extent does the group make time for and encourage personal reflection on the challenges of leading community change?

Asking these questions may open the door to a meaningful dialogue about a community's specific issues. Reflection is important in any coaching experience, so that individuals may be able to move on and create new ways of being and doing.

### Successful Coaching for Reflection

Successful coaching is mindful that community work emerges from a way of thinking about things and doing things. These community ways are social constructions that become part of the community wallpaper— framing the work but basically untended. Community coaching



**TIP:** Working with planning team working on a long-term community-based food and fitness initiative, the coach supplied several reflection questions each month. The group leaders would choose or adapt one of the questions to use as a warm-up exercise at monthly planning meetings.

*"If I had known then what I know now... Learning is a hindsight that is a bridge to the future."*



**TALE:** Jennifer Henderson is a community coach who focuses on social justice organizations, foundations and businesses that want to be socially responsible. Jennifer was working with a lesbian cancer group, and they were trying to figure out why they couldn't keep women of color as employees. Part of Jennifer's work as a coach was to have the group reflect on the situation to see what had happened in the past. She used time mapping. This allowed the group to recall when and why women of color were most involved in their initiative and why that ended. The group found that a commitment to diversity was what the business needed, not spurts of diversity when an initiative called for it. They made it part of their business to actually be diverse, which meant that resources, both time and focus, were now given to all kinds of communities that had not been consistently involved before.

helps communities change the wallpaper to frame their work in more inclusive, collaborative and thoughtful ways. Coaches engage communities in reflection by asking for feedback, suggestions and evaluation strategies, and encouraging discussion on what is being learned. While funders and project managers often have evaluation built into the program, successful coaches also search for the reflection opportunity to help teams and communities create a community of practice approach to evaluating and learning from their work.

Successful coaches are always on the search for the “coachable moment or reflection opportunity” when the right question or observation can trigger a new way of seeing and hence a new way of thinking and doing. These coaches are likely to respond to a question with another question that encourages community members to reflect on their own experiences for insight and answers. In addition, coaches work to see how communities and teams frame their work as building on the groundwork already in place rather than as something new and apart from the community. Reflective processes also encourage our co-learners to consider how their current efforts can work in concert with other initiatives or programs in the community. Successful coaching for reflection helps communities structure opportunities for evaluation and hence the opportunity to reflect on expectations, possibilities and to celebrate their successes.

Reflection is also about voice. Through the process of reflection we learn to hear other voices differently and to know our own voice better and to enhance it with new understanding and learning. As one coach commented, “It is not sufficient to simply create a space, we need to help them know their voice is valuable by affirming/validating their point(s) of view.”

Coaching for reflection plays a critical role in the ability of groups to move from ‘being stuck in the rut’ to seeing the possibilities on the horizon. Coaches need to be alert for the coachable moments that increase the capacity of the group to raise their consciousness and to move into a transformative mindset. One coach suggested that at the same time, “we need to have the COURAGE to bring the reality of the issue to the people.” “It IS poverty. Name it and bring understanding about it.”

Among the important inputs coaches can add to successful reflection include the ability to create an environment where people are comfortable with a variety of vocabularies. Coaches help level the playing field so all can participate in reflective activities. Coaches can also look for openings for thoughtful questions that encourage reflection. Several offered their experience in framing these questions using Appreciative Inquiry, so that community members are encouraged to revisit their history to find examples of success in the areas where they are struggling. For example, when people get stuck on finding a way to bring people together in a successful community meeting, asking how it is has been done in the past asserts local strengths and encourages people to consider on how to build on them.

## Coaching for Results

The ability to see results is very important to maintaining the commitment of individuals, communities and organizations. Identifying the critical (steps) results that must occur if goals are to be reached is critical to a successful community coaching experience. And, as many have said, finding the low-hanging fruit helps to build the energy and confidence crucial to long-term change effort. Coaches help groups understand what actual work has to be done between setting goals and getting results, often the hardest part of making things happen. Once everyone understands what has to be done, it is easy to add the how and the when. Given the importance of early wins, coaches must pay attention to this component of the Six Rs early in the process, but it is imperative as groups move from one stage of their implementation process to another or encounter set backs that require rethinking the plan. Several ways to get to the desired results include thought provoking questions such as:

- What can or has the group achieved?
- What is the critical work and what will it take?
- How will it manage and invest its resources, communicate and partner?
- Does the group have effective roadmaps that guide its efforts? Is it effective in meeting



**TALE:** For Tony Genia of the Northwest Area Foundation, results are imperative in order for the communities in which he works to get funding. Tony works with Indian reservations in developing community-building processes and strategies as they plan and implement the Reservation Ventures model supported by the Northwest Area Foundation. At the Cheyenne River Sioux Nation, for example, many people have lived in poverty for seven or eight generations. Some of the people feel they are so far in the hole, they don't know of anyone who has succeeded in moving beyond poverty. There are few jobs on the reservation. Tony worked with the tribal Ventures program to provide basic and detailed learning events that helped people understand that there is an economic system out there they can participate in, and that prepared them to find and retain a job. A key success of Tribal Ventures was setting up earned income tax credit programs and entrepreneurship training. From Tony's perspective, approaches to coaching are different for each reservation. It requires trust building and reflection before you can produce results.



**TALE:** Becky Miles Polka has a background in community health improvement. She has coached two competing constituencies in coming together around specific goals in terms of improving access to health care for an underserved population in the community. She had to help these groups find a way for everyone to feel that there was some value in their participation in this larger initiative. In addition to managing conflicts, she also helped the group expand their ability to manage conflict. She helped these groups be reflective around some very difficult issues, often becoming the voice of their collective conscience. Because of the controversy over who was going to take the lead, she also assisted them in learning to more effectively manage relationships. The collaborative succeeded in getting the grant, which has resulted in strengthening the safety-net infrastructure that helps support improved access to care for vulnerable populations.

targets, producing results, communicating with members and the community?

- How is the group measuring its progress and what help could a coach provide?
- How strong are the operations and management functions of the coordinating group or organization—is it a strong performing group or does it need project management coaching?
- Are we clear on the first steps we must take to achieve our goal?

### Successful Coaching for Results

Among the descriptions of successful coaching for results, participants mentioned the important role coaching can play in assisting the team or the community to set realistic expectations up front to avoid setting themselves up for failure. Conversely, many coaches described the need to coach funders on their expectations as well. Roundtable participants also talked about their role in helping communities to move from inaction to action with a well placed question.

### What Coaches Need to Know about Coaching for Results

Participants described the coach's role in helping communities or teams find ways to move forward often revolves around helping them be mindful of the difference between an 'Agenda' and 'Program Objectives/Direction.' Coaches in these situations ask thoughtful questions that help community members identify the barriers or thinking ruts that keep them from making progress as well as the unseen opportunities. As coaches help the community to own the problems, they must constantly reevaluate the agenda from which they are working so that does not become a barrier to their process and progress. In doing so, coaches often find that getting results means first translating between the community and the funder. The coach's ability to bridge the gap between the funders and the communities provides an essential bridge between local decision making and external resources in ways that reinforce the communities' ability to make progress toward its goals.

## Coaching for Reach

Coaching for reach invokes both the art of coaching, as coaches find, develop and use coachable moments, and the craft of coaching, as coaches use those moments to help people expand their view of the possible and their understanding of the present. It is important that a community coach remain neutral and not get sucked into a power struggle as she firmly guides the group past familiar—but often ineffective—ways to engage new people and groups or take action. Important coaching questions to generate powerful dialogue include:

- How can the group make a lasting difference?
- What are participants searching for in this effort?
- Where is the potential for individual, organizational or community transformation?
- What is the preferred future and what do people have to learn or change to make it happen?
- How will people ‘be’ the change while ‘doing’ the work?
- How will the effort lead to community inclusion and shared leadership?
- Is the group vision-oriented and focused on a long-term idea of what it really wants to create in the community, and is there a shared commitment to this among the whole group or team?
- Does the group tend to recycle current or old ideas rather than expanding to emphasize bold moves? Is the group focused more on transactional or transformational ideas at this stage of its life cycle?
- What historic or persistent barriers does the group identify as key to accelerating change in the community and what would work to address these more effectively?
- How do new people bring their voices, creative skills, ideas and networks into the group? What is standing in the way of deeper community engagement?



**TIP:** Sometimes groups get stuck on all the reasons things won't work or on the perceived insurmountable barriers. The more they talk about these options the deeper they dig their rut. Breaking out of this negativity requires breaking out of the mindset. One strategy that has worked well for some coaches is to ask the group to close their eyes and **imagine** what it would look like if they were able to overcome the barriers. Invoking imagination often helps people see the issue from a new perspective and allows people to map a path to get to their goal.

### **What Coaches Need to Know about Coaching for Reach**

Successful coaching for reach often involves transforming the question of inclusion from a counting game to a community norm that appreciates and values differences—where people see the new environment as one that holds benefits for all. Our coaches described this as, “Create a space for all to show up and be, with their own heart, mind and spirit.”

Transformational coaching invariably involves challenges to the status quo, perhaps most often a challenge to the traditional view of leadership and leaders. Successful coaches work with the team and the community so that the alternative leadership structures and leaders emerge from the their conversations and are based on the real and felt experiences of community members.

Having a clear focus on where the group wants to go provides an essential framework for reach. One roundtable participants queried, “However, how do you challenge the status quo if you have no agenda???” Coaches provide a safe space to allow the group to “challenge the status quo for a valid reason—not because the coach has an axe to grind,” but to answer the question: does the status quo meet the group’s needs? Of course challenging the status quo means something different to different people and communities, so coaches need to be alert to helping them find common definitions and in that process treat all those differences with respect.

To prepare for this work, successful coaches found it useful to learn about community change processes and examples of success, as well as to discover more about how the transformation process can unfold. Successful coaches keep an inventory of success stories, examples and activities. Coaches often rely on one another to augment their inventory and to share insights and interventions.

Well prepared coaches can “reveal the hidden dimensions of social problems.” That is, they find nonthreatening ways to illuminate the elephants and other troubling aspects of the situation in ways that help the group see and deal with those issues constructively. These coaches also act as “Guardian of the Parameters” and facilitate the process that allows communities to work toward

transformational change. Successful coaching for capacity occurs when the group has moved from participants or observers to actually doing the coaches job. In short, coaching for reach stretches communities and teams beyond their view of what is possible.

## Coaching for Resilience

Finally, the Resilience component comes when the individuals are READY to take a stand for what matters over the long term and make it a collective principle. By the time groups build a resilient fiber, they have spent a great deal of time in communication so that a shared view is valued and is operative. There is an appreciation for how everything and everyone works together to make the whole. Coaching for resilience is also about how the coach moves out of the coaching role, and the group finds a way to coach itself. For a community coach to foster resilience with the group in which they are working, the following questions could be beneficial:

- What is the group's current thinking about sustainability for its vision and its main ideas and programs?
- How well equipped is the group to bounce back from failure, disappointment or a reliance on outmoded strategies?
- Does the group build and support leaders and intentionally provide means for renewal and enrichment?
- Where is the untapped potential in the group and in the community that could be harnessed to support the change agenda?
- Is the group connected to a set of strong and flexible networks that provide energy or security for long-term community building?
- What are the stories of success that can guide us and inspire us as move forward?

Community coaching is uniquely positioned to meet the challenge of achieving sustainability for organizations and communities; these communities may be geographic or communities of interest. Coaching can transcend traditional capacity-building approaches. By building the competencies





**TALE:** Ken Hubbell of Ken Hubbell and Associates works with community coalitions, organizations and higher education institutions that are deeply engaged in developing the surrounding community or region. In a group context, resilience is the capacity to maintain a long-term vision, to take what they have learned from each other, and add a regular focus on personal renewal and creativity to generate innovation. This process helps the group become not only creative problem solvers, but creative thinkers as well. A high level of resilience helps the group and community achieve momentum so they don't slip backward in the face of loss or disappointment. Ken coached the University of Namibia's Northern Campus leadership group for five years under grants from the Ford Foundation. A key element in the final phase of coaching was helping the group assess their capacity to sustain the innovative approaches they had practiced with Ken. Ken helped the team build a learning process for each individual to increase the facilitation, design, system diagramming, scenario development or coaching skill set so the group could continue the momentum that was generated during the coaching relationship.

and skills of people within the community, community coaching recognizes and builds upon the human assets of organizations and communities. Effective community coaching can help transform communities and organizations into high-performing sustainable entities. Generations of home grown talent become part of the community infrastructure.

### **What Coaches Need to Know about Coaching for Resilience**

Just as communities often overlook the need for leadership succession planning, coaches and coaching initiatives often do not give enough attention to the point where the community no longer has a coach. In both cases, attention to the long-term capacity and sustainability questions is critical for the group, so they can thrive, not just survive, into the future. A key strategy for coaching on resilience is to bring up the question of long-term sustainability and succession planning early and often. As groups learn to ask this question of themselves with every new endeavor or changing circumstance, they create the capacity necessary to thrive. Coaches can also link community leaders to resources in their networks so that community leaders have increased access to outside resources as they address new challenges and possibilities. For coaches working in an institutional setting, it is often the case that just as they may move out of coaching job in one situation, new situations provide new coaching opportunities. In one sense, coaches need to work themselves out of a job as they help communities build capacity. In another sense, that capacity-building work will generate new coaching opportunities as communities continue to build on their strengths and reach out to new possibilities.

As part of MSDI, the group received a project implementation grant as well as the assistance of a community coach, Ken Hubbell. Team members negotiated with Ken and developed a service agreement based on what the team members felt they needed to be successful and what Ken felt he could provide. After the document was signed, it helped the team and coach manage their relationship and expectations. The agreement was reviewed annually and terms renegotiated based on the team's progress and capacity and the changing circumstances in the community.



## Example of a Community and Coach Agreement

After several discussions about the types of coaching assistance the MSDI team is most interested in as they move into the project implementation phase and the specific ways the coach might serve the community team, the following list was generated:

- Help the group stay on task with their proposal concepts, strategies and action plans.
- Help the group master project management when there are several inter-related activities involving multiple stakeholders that must be managed by a small staff and a busy volunteer board.
- Help build the team's capacity in facilitation, team collaboration and leadership for change.
- Help the team identify and locate resources.
- Provide a mirror to the team that reflects insightful observations and challenges about their collaboration, shared leadership and capacity building.
- Assist the incoming director in understanding the history of the Initiative—the expectations of the Kellogg-MSDI systems, principles and related strategies—and organizing and managing an effective work plan to steer the project activities, and developing a set of working relationships with the broader community team.

This list represents an informal “Coaching Plan” for 2002-2003, which all agreed would be a guide for the coach's service to the team during that time.





## Chapter 4

# How Coaching Changes over Time

Coaches can work with community building efforts at several different phases. While the essential coaching principles and sensibility will likely be consistent, the dynamics are different in an organizing process than they are in an implementation or sustaining phase. For this guide, we described these phases as five cycles. A coach might be fortunate to work with a group throughout the complete cycle over a decade, or she might enter the process and provide coaching during a shorter cycle.

Table 2. Basic Life Cycle of Community Building

Basic life cycle of community building	Emphasis
Early start-up phase	Planning; design, theories and strategic vision; organizing, team building and inclusion and engagement strategies
Gear-up phase	Expanding focus, communication, team and project development or early action; refining organizational processes and structures
Action and learning phase	Implementing projects or action; refining strategies, expanding resources or partners; deepening leadership and collaboration, capturing progress-lessons and refining strategies; expanding communication
Acceleration and momentum building phase	Leveraging ideas, results, relationships and resources, policy targets and innovation
Sustaining phase	Developing next generation leadership; renewing vision and organization



**TIP: Engaging people from the get-go**—A coach can get people engaged in the process by asking people to tell a story about what they are most of proud of in the community and then use small groups to discuss the ideas from these stories that give life to the community. This approach also helps people move from a problem-focus to a solution-focus. With this approach, community members can begin to build trust and nurture common ground. The positive approach also builds energy for change.

**TIP: Focusing on the Positive**—Sometimes a community has been so focused on what is wrong, that people become frustrated and despair of any hope for the future. Successful community change efforts do not prosper in these environments. Coaches can help by encouraging people to look at the strengths of the community by asset mapping, asking young people to take photos of what they like best in the community, and/or engaging in story telling about the times when people felt most connected to the community or when they felt closest to the community.

## Coaches Ask Questions to Catalyze Group Learning, Problem Solving and Strategic Change in Community

Coaches often provide guiding questions that help people look deeper into their situation and frankly assess issues, trends, obstacles and solutions. These can be developed by the coach but often are shaped by the group context in concert with the team coordinator, coordinating committee or organization chair. While previous chapters of the guide provide many examples of the kinds of questions a coach could use as a group moves through the Six Rs, we have included a few additional examples in Table 3 to illustrate the variety of challenges and options a coach may face and employ in service of the team in various phases of community work.

## Coaches Deal with Four Typical Stages of Groups During Community Change

As we have described throughout the guide, coaches work with people and groups to facilitate the community change process, and knowing something about group process has been very useful in the field. There are archetypal patterns of group process and behavior that surface during this process and shape a group's ability to achieve new breakthroughs. Coaches can use tools like Tuckman's Group Development model to help a group perceive its own development challenges and learn collectively the best ways to build trust and generate progress. While these stages are very similar to the phases described above, groups may cycle through the stages several times in one phase as new members come and others leave. According to Wikipedia, the **Forming—Storming—Norming—Performing** model of group development was first proposed by Bruce Tuckman in 1965, who maintained that these phases are all necessary and inevitable in order for the team to grow, to face up to challenges, to tackle problems, to find solutions, to plan work and to deliver results. This model has become the basis for subsequent models.<sup>1</sup> Though forming, storming, norming might be challenges in the start-up phase of community building, as described above, a coach might encounter these dynamics even when a group seems to have achieved a stable level of performance on its strategic plan. As new people enter the effort or resources and expectations change, the developmental dynamics can return through the early phases.

<sup>1</sup> Downloaded from [en.wikipedia.org/Forming,\\_storming,\\_norming,\\_and\\_performing](https://en.wikipedia.org/Forming,_storming,_norming,_and_performing) on April 16, 2010.

Table 3. Possible Guiding Questions Coaches Could Use

Phase	Type of Challenge a Team is Facing	Possible Guiding Questions a Coach Could Use
Early start-up phase	Building a group or team	<p>Coaches suggest strategies to help groups and individuals assess their strengths and weakness as well as the opportunities or threats in the situation. Coaches share honest perceptions of the group's ways of seeing and thinking that can prompt important shifts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will we get to know and trust each other to become a group that succeeds and makes a contribution to our region?</li> <li>• How will we identify what we all are especially good at, what we know, and what we don't know but want to learn?</li> <li>• How will we organize our meetings, our notes, our work and information?</li> <li>• How will we develop a way to meet that is convenient for most or all of the team and how can we all contribute to make it happen?</li> <li>• How can we become better leaders in our community?</li> <li>• What kind of commitment do we have for deep change and finding new ways to work positively with others?</li> <li>• What stories should we tell and share about our lives so we can remind ourselves that a better community is possible—and needed?</li> <li>• What can we learn from our best experiences with other groups and how can we use the learning to have the best group possible?</li> </ul>
	Gaining commitment:	Coaches can “call the question” for a group that is drifting to trigger a commitment to move forward, set goals or take a plunge the coach feels might lead to an important success.



**TIP: *Generating the Conversation***— A coach could enrich the learning by following up the initial inquiry with questions that help the group expand its thinking by asking:

1. What else does this suggest—other implications?
2. What ideas haven't we considered?
3. Who else should we talk with to really understand this issue more fully?
4. What does this initial analysis reveal about our perspective on things?



**Tip: Using Data**—Access to real data can help clarify the current situation. Often, for example, people are surprised to learn how many small businesses actually exist in the community. Community leaders can access many kinds of data on the internet. They can also ask for help from Cooperative Extension, the local college, state agencies and the Small Business Development Centers. Coaches can ask questions like, if this is our baseline, what does it tell us about what we need to focus on? What will it look like if we are successful? Getting local people involved in collecting data can be really helpful as well.

Phase	Type of Challenge a Team is Facing	Possible Guiding Questions a Coach Could Use
Early start-up phase	Establishing a shared vision	<p>To come up with a far-reaching dream that everyone gets behind, can the group find an answer for questions like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is it that we really want to create together in our community?</li> <li>• What might the community look like in 2030 if we could be the most successful prosperous community possible?</li> <li>• What will the future leadership look like?</li> <li>• How can we do something that has never been done in the community without losing our way?</li> <li>• How can we uncover the greatness and spirit that we know is present in our people?</li> </ul>
Early start-up or Gear-up phase	Developing a clear understanding of the current situation in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kinds of policies are shaping the current situation?</li> <li>• What is excellent and working well in some places already?</li> <li>• What does the community have to build on that has gone unnoticed?</li> <li>• What have you learned over the past 5-50 years that can be used carry the community forward toward the vision?</li> <li>• What is standing in the way of a better future?</li> <li>• What big forces are impacting your community right now that create uncertainty and or opportunity?</li> </ul>
Gear-up phase	Understanding the mindsets and attitudes that shape the community and limit change	<p>Explore the positive and the cautious forces of change. Look into questions like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we create a real shift in the mindsets of people and leaders of organizations, businesses, agencies, churches and towns/cities so that our vision can become a reality?</li> <li>• How can we see new possibilities that lead to the vision so we don't get stuck in old habits?</li> <li>• How can groups doing good work connect instead of compete?</li> <li>• How can leaders add a focus on a long-term vision to the current improvement projects?</li> </ul>

Phase	Type of Challenge a Team is Facing	Possible Guiding Questions a Coach Could Use
Start-up and Gear-up phase	Developing clear strategies or solutions	<p>Coaches can challenge the core logic of a group's emerging strategies to help a team clarify their theories and assumptions.</p> <p>Generate a plan with a set of clear goals and recommended priority solutions. These may be some basic questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What must change to move forward, what are the big goals?</li> <li>• How will we identify our progress toward the new future?</li> <li>• What are the best actions to activate the goals?</li> <li>• Which things will create the biggest impact and which will only create small change at the margins?</li> </ul>
Start-up and Gear-up phase	Developing a structure to guide the community building plans	<p>As your plan takes shape, your team will have to solve questions like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will we steer the work of this plan?</li> <li>• Do we need a formal organization with a board that will be here for the long term? Would it need funds, legal status and procedures?</li> <li>• Can we invite existing groups to help carry out the plan? How do we send a successful invitation?</li> <li>• What kinds of roles should the early designers and planners have once the plan is solid and ready?</li> </ul>



**TIP:** In a village in Central America working on sustainability, the coach realized that men and women have different sets of knowledge about natural resources. She helped them design a local data gathering process where pairs of one man and one woman went door-to-door. This approach created an appreciation of the value of each set of knowledge and helped expand everyone's understanding.

**TIP: *Designing the Future***—One way to get people thinking about strategies that will help them reach their desired future is to ask for provocative propositions. Provocative propositions are statements about how things could be in the future and speak to structures and processes needed to arrive there. An example of a provocative proposition might be: Every child completes high school. Or, our community foundation will get donations or pledges from 25% of the community in three years, or no one will be hungry in our community.



**TIP: Reflecting On Success**—Often coaches can help groups with reflection by suggesting a question which people can respond to at the beginning of the meeting. This process builds in reflection and also helps center people in on the work they will do at the meeting. A reflection question for a group just getting started might be something like: What did you like best about our last meeting and how might we make our future meetings even better? Or, how might we expand our efforts more deeply and broadly into the community? For later in the process, the question might revolve around sharing thoughts about how the work of the group is making a difference in the community.

Phase	Type of Challenge a Team is Facing	Possible Guiding Questions a Coach Could Use
Action and learning phase	Implementing new programs and solutions and moving to important action and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well have our early strategies and actions worked?</li> <li>• What can we learn from our early successes that can help us be successful in the long-term?</li> <li>• How well is the coordination and management effort working? Is the community plan on track, making progress, or starting to drift? How can we use what we are learning to have the effort work even better?</li> <li>• How strong is the community support, participation and investment? How might we increase that support?</li> <li>• Is the basic message of change still effective in communicating with key audiences? What has worked best for us? How might it work better as we move to the next stage of our work?</li> <li>• What unexpected consequences or disruptions have affected the original strategies?</li> <li>• What new insight about renewing the community has emerged and what implications does this suggest for leaders?</li> <li>• How have the pieces of the plan started to trigger support, encouragement and visible signs of progress? How might we increase the visibility of our work?</li> <li>• How have we diversified or enlarged the circle of key partners and allies? How might we become even more inclusive? Who is not at the table that should be?</li> </ul>



Phase	Type of Challenge a Team is Facing	Possible Guiding Questions a Coach Could Use
Acceleration and momentum-building phase	Structuring a good way to increase impact	<p>The community leadership team or group (or organization) will have to find good solutions for these types of questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the chief signals of positive impact on the community? What other things might we look at to see results?</li> <li>• What new evidence or proof have we collected to advance the efforts and to make the story more powerful and effective?</li> <li>• What will be required to accelerate the effort?</li> </ul> <p>Coaches help people take the learning and understanding they get from their work to the next level by intentionally setting aside time for articulating the emerging insights and for facilitating learning agendas. Incorporating learning activities into regular meetings helps groups adapt to new challenges and opportunities and creates a safe space for learning from small failures.</p>
Sustaining phase	Sustain momentum or sustain the energy for strengthening the community	<p>The community leadership team or group (or organization) will have to find good solutions for these kind of questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will people continue to learn ways to innovate so the same people don't always lead the change effort, or so that leaders don't keep trying the same old ideas?</li> <li>• How will this approach carry on for 20 years?</li> <li>• Is the organizing structure still appropriate?</li> <li>• How will you attract new volunteers to help move to the next stage of work?</li> <li>• What is the most important conversation about/with our community that we still haven't launched? What do most folks want to see happen next and why?</li> </ul>



**TIP: *Involving Youth***—More and more successful community change efforts depend on youth engagement—not only for their energy and excitement but also for strategizing about success and carrying out the work. The coach can work with the group to identify good engagement strategies for that community. Successful examples include working with local teachers, integrating school projects and enlisting young people to interview local residents about the change effort or to take pictures indicating how the community has changed.



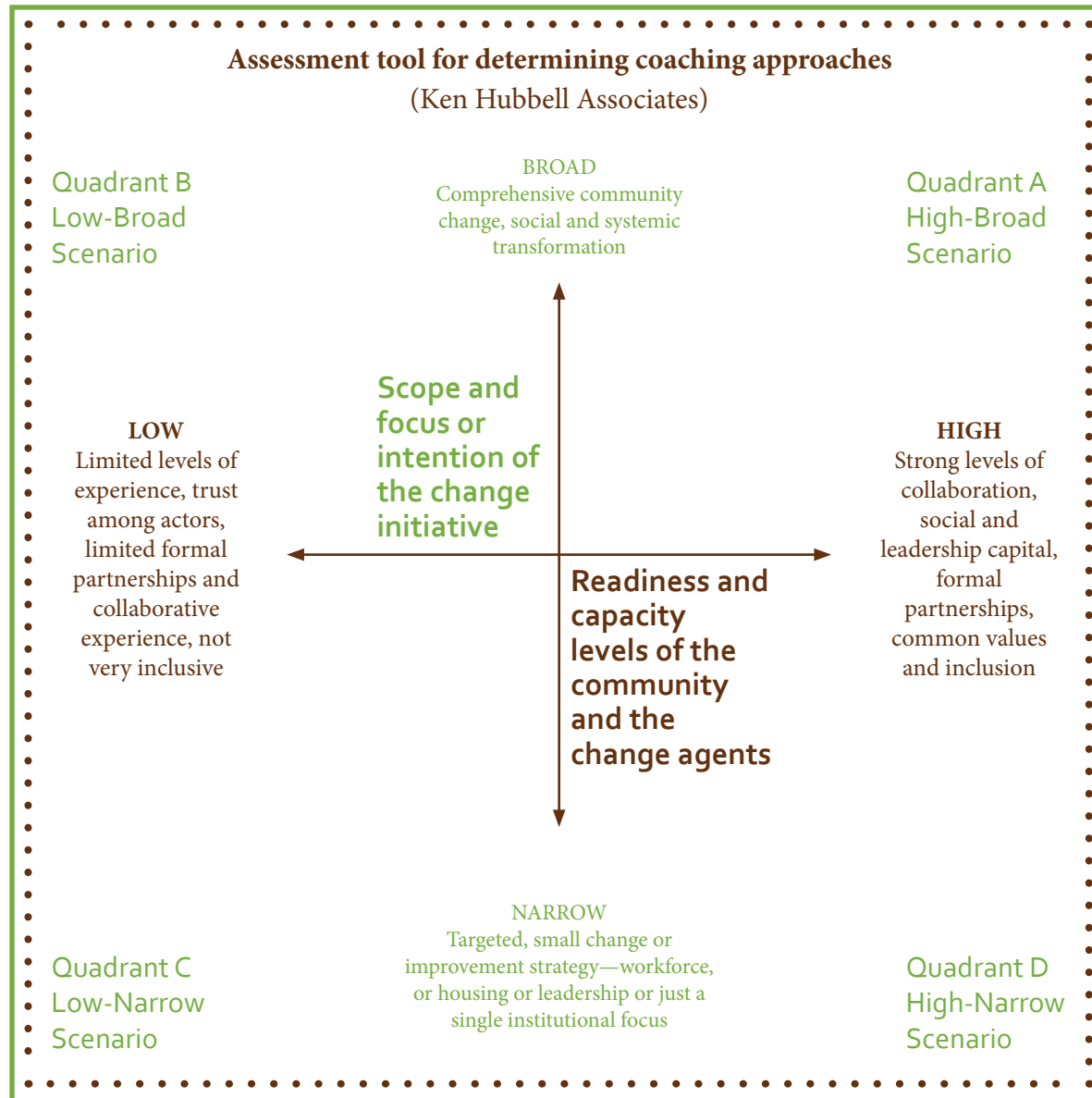
**TIP: Assessing Group Process**—Sometimes coaches can draw a picture of the forming, storming, norming, performing, and reforming process and ask group members to place an X where they think the group is in the process and tell the group why. This technique helps people see the need for better dialog and cooperation and to design strategies to better address these needs.

Coaching is not a simple linear activity, but rather a complex cycle of interactions that are framed by the phase of community building work and the level of resilience the team or leadership group has developed. The intentional nature of coaching means that the coach must attend to the level of coaching, the R appropriate for the challenge of the moment, the phase of the work and the stage of their group process to find the best openings as s/he searches for or creates coaching moments leading to transformation and breakthroughs. At its best, coaching addresses the complexity of system level change and integrated networks. Diagram 7 provides a mechanism for locating a coaching effort in relation to the capacity of the group and the size of the effort. Once the coach and community agree on where the work is located in the diagram, it is easier for the coach to consider the opportunities and challenges related to each of the Six Rs and prepare accordingly.

Coaches typically practice a customized form of bricolage<sup>2</sup> with groups. This is an artistic term that describes how people continuously fashion a workable and meaningful collection of wisdom, ideas, practices, tools and techniques that make sense and fit the community culture and context. It is unlikely that a coach can rely on one single construct or tool to facilitate community change.

<sup>2</sup> Downloaded from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bricolage> on April 16, 2010

Diagram 7: Assessment tool for determining coaching approaches







## Chapter 5

# How We Know It is Successful: Evaluating and Improving Coaching Practice

Coaching offers unique benefits to funders, intermediaries, communities and coaches themselves, in that successful coaching provides opportunities for all to expand their learning. However, there are no identified metrics or thorough evaluations to help assess the impact of coaching itself. When asked how they knew they made a difference in the community, coaches reported these indicators:

- Communities used new ways to live and work together.
- Community teams uncovered new ideas that led to successful community change.
- People came to see the reality of different perspectives so they could work with others more effectively, reduce conflict, and create the conditions for a learning community.
- Leaders included the whole community rather than a select few or the traditional elite.
- Groups successfully challenged the status quo.
- Community groups were able to generate self-direction—to decide for themselves what will work, how and why.
- The group found a way to get unstuck and connect or reconnect their strategic work to their vision.

- Community members recognized that they are responsible for the community and moved from dependency on outside business and government to realizing they must make the change they want to see.

Most coaches say they just know they made a key difference in a community change process; their intuition tells them that the work they have done with communities was critically important to the change effort. Yet, we often feel we need data and other information to back up that intuition. Coaches can evaluate their work in a variety of ways. Generally, framing any feedback request or evaluation effort using Appreciative Inquiry is a good idea as it provides a focus for a productive, yet critical conversation. Beginning with a request for a story or example of how the coach has made a difference, the coach and the community can then look at the story to identify the factors that contribute to successful coaching. The follow-up to the story revolves around questions such as: What elements contributed to that success? What would it look like if we could do even better? The answers help people consider how everyone has a role in making things work better. The subsequent discussion can then focus on specifics of who will do what to ensure that both a coach and the community team are all working to make things better. By asking everyone “What could we do to be even more effective,” you can escape the blame game that often stymies good critical reflection. You can access additional information, questions and approaches regarding Appreciative Inquiry at the commons site: <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu>.

Three ways coaches can seek feedback on their coaching role include:

1. Using the community contract, the coach can seek feedback on how well the coach has addressed the items in the contract as well as how well the contract has worked for both the community and the coach. Further discussion can illuminate changes that will better support the community’s efforts.
2. Coaches can also seek feedback from supervisors by using a similar methodology. Often times this evaluation work is less about approaches and successes with coaching and more about how the coach has helped the community reach certain milestones or achieve goals.

3. Coaches can engage other coaches in discussions about coaching experiences and what can be learned from them to increase the efficacy of future coaching.

Most coaches want to see how their contribution has aided the overall change initiative. Working with community members, coaches can also look at the role of coaching in overall system change. In the second phase of RCCI, college teams were asked to map the impact of the project and the coach on the college and community. Using tools such as the Community Capitals Framework (see tools section, p. 80) and Most Significant Change, a process for focusing on stories about community change, groups can map how their work has changed what people do and how they think about change, how these differences have led to changes in other parts of the community system, and what impact these changes have on community systems. These mapping activities provide opportunities for reflection and refocusing change efforts as well as highlighting where coaching has played a key role in the change process.

In the tools section (p.80), we include an example of a mapping process based on an impact map developed by one of the coaching roundtables. This map represents the collective impacts in more than a dozen communities across the country in 2007 where coaching was a key change strategy. You will note three things that indicate a sustainable and successful strategy. First, the map illustrates the ripple effect of coaching by linking items that follow after the first interactions with coaching. Second, the map shows that there are impacts in all of the capitals indicating a somewhat balanced strategy, although there is always room to increase the balance. Third, you can see how interactions in one capital can impact assets in other capitals, demonstrating the interaction among the capitals or the interdependency of the strategy and its impact on community systems as a whole.

## **Other Indicators of Successful Coaching**

Coaches who participated in learning events in 2005 and 2007 sponsored by the national Community Coaching Initiative generated an additional list of indicators that suggest a positive impact from coaching:

- The community describes their needs and requests coaching.
- A group naturally can look outward to see a bigger picture.
- The group has a new platform for respectful and meaningful dialogue.
- The group has moved from participants or observers to actually doing the coach's job.
- The community can challenge the status quo in an indirect or direct method.
- The group is outcome-focused but also process aware.
- The coaching function spreads out: coach builds his/her own capacity to work with the team, the team builds its own capacity to work with community, and the community builds capacity and so on.
- The group inspires individuals and also brings different groups together to build coalitions (individual level and community level).
- The group generates alignment with other goals the community has on its collective agenda.
- The group has a heightened awareness for a guiding framework or philosophy—a clear purpose.

In this chapter we have described how coaching has been evaluated and how coaches can get feedback on their work. Much of the information we have on the impact of coaching is anecdotal, based on the stories and comments of coaches, community leaders and funders. Additional information on the coaching role is often buried in the files of various foundations and not accessible. At this time, some participants in the coaching community of practice are seeking resources to develop and employ evaluation tools that can help us better understand the role of coaching in community change initiatives. This effort is hampered, in part, because many community leaders have difficulty sorting out the coaching role from the other facets of the community change work in their community. A current effort to collect data on the impact of coaching is under way in coaching community of practice. Contact Mary Emery, [memery@iastate.edu](mailto:memery@iastate.edu), if you would like more information.





## Chapter 6

# How Do I Learn the Art of Community Coaching?

Coaching is not only about learning and using skills and applying tools in appropriate ways. As one coach has commented, “Coaching is about being in the world.” Being in the world is more than being attentive to others. It is the processes people use to interact with one another and the way work gets done. Stepping back from active engagement to see the how things fit together across time and space is an important element of coaching. Success means that personal transformation occurs for the coach alongside the community transformation. Thus, coaches become attuned to how personal and community work intertwines and how knowledge of this interaction enriches both community processes and individual growth.

## **So, How Do You Move Into Community Coaching?**

Community coaches can enter this field with strong experience from the worlds of community or organizational development since the core ideas are enmeshed in most community-led renewal efforts. For other coaches, experience in teaching, consulting, ecology, education, public health, economic development and similar fields provides partial grounding for the issues in which a community coach may be involved. Bringing the skills associated with these kinds of work to the experience of community coaching provides an important piece of the scaffolding for great coaching.

Beyond the technical approaches, language or common practices related to these fields of work, the most critical piece of the fabric of effective community coaching is the sensibility described in Chapter 1 as the art and craft of community coaching. Aspects of this sensibility include:

- Being willing to be fully present in service of a community's best intentions for its people and future.
- Being willing to interact deeply and fully with others in both transactional and transformational activities.
- Being willing to face the common blind spots among activists and search with them for the deeper source from which their intentions and actions arise.
- Being willing to be disturbed, to be changed. Margaret Wheatley describes this as being willing to be "disturbed by newness rather than clinging to our certainty."
- Being open to connecting people through their differences and through their common agreements.

In our work to become better coaches, we must move out of our comfort zone and experience the pain and distress associated with new learning.

### **A Community Coach Should Incorporate Active Unlearning with Learning**

Successful community coaches have to unlearn some assumptions about specialized expertise and the common roles or persona of the outside expert in order to help local community change agents use their own expertise in new ways. Coaches will have to shift from a focus on the parts of the process to a deeper appreciation (and wonder) about the whole). The pace and typical cycles of change in communities most resemble other complex and evolving natural systems, so linear change models should be set aside whenever possible and replaced or complemented with more adaptive approaches.

Becoming a better coach is more than learning new skills, tools and approaches. Just as coaching can transform community and leadership efforts, it is critical to reflect on how coaching work changes who we are. Successful coaches find ways to reflect through journaling, writing, conversation and reading. They also take reflection a step further to consider how what they are learning through reflection can increase their ability as a coach and add insight to the work of community change.

Being a coach means being open to new ideas and new ways of thinking. Coaches challenge ideas and opinions of others; not from a win-the-argument perspective, but from a how-can-we-understand-this-better focus. Coaches ask “truing” questions that get at basic assumptions and values. Using insights gained over time to uncover assumptions and identify values aids in guiding community leaders and members through a similar process. Many people who come into the work of community change are anxious to begin making a difference; these best efforts are often stymied by a lack of trust and understanding that can only be remedied by engaging in the deeper work of creating shared meaning. Another part of the internal work successful coaches undertake includes shaking off unrealistic perceptions and expectations of what community development processes can accomplish in short time frames.

The coach’s work involves participating in new learning and then creating or supporting transformational learning experiences for the teams. The coach must be open to learning, changing and being the transformation agent that the teams are also becoming.

Successful coaches review their own values to determine if they can operate initially from a bias-free position without preconceived notions of what is possible in the community. The line between providing good coaching and inappropriately influencing the group requires assessment and reflection on an ongoing basis. As once coach commented, coaches need to remind themselves, “It’s NOT about the coach. It’s not their personal agenda or community or group.” One strategy coaches have used to help navigate this line requires continually asking “Whose needs am I meeting?” Coaches also need to stay alert for opportunities to help people travel the continuum from the

abstract to the concrete and vice-versa. We all have our comfort zones with regard to ways of thinking; successful collaborative action requires moving out of these comfort zones at some point. Coaches use their experience in managing the discomfort of dealing with new and different things to help others.

As we described previously in this guide, community coaching requires continuous experimentation and learning on behalf of the coach. Each coach continually works to uncover his or her innate inner resources, to create a centered outlook, to foster a curious nature, and to expand skills, competencies and techniques (conceptual or facilitative) en route to improving the coaching practice in community settings. The bottom line is that great coaching takes lots of practice and can't be rushed.

When we surveyed more than 30 community coaches, they collectively generated this list of practices to stretch their coaching muscles:

- Studying storytelling and approaches using metaphor
- Trying to coach and learn by doing it and reflecting on it
- Examining frameworks like Community Capitals and resources from the field of community psychology
- Looking into literature on collaboration and high-performing teams
- Developing a better understanding of intuition as a tool for coaching
- Learning about partnership development
- Exploring new community technologies: YouTube, etc. digital storytelling
- Journaling and exchanging insights with other colleagues
- Participating in convenings
- Undertaking continuous personal development and working with a life coach
- Connecting with colleagues to exchange ideas
- Developing new tools each time I coach
- Reading intensely about change

## Where Can You Go to Learn More about Community Coaching?

The best way to learn more about community coaching is to engage in coaching work with a mentor. You can find potential mentors on our community of practice website, <http://www.communitycoaching.ning.com>. You can also engage your own networks to find people with experience in community change work.

One interesting example of how coaching has been institutionalized is the Kansas Coaching Academy. Sponsored by Kansas State University Cooperative Extension and Kansas Pride communities, the academy provides training in the coaching approach to partners and practitioners associated with Kansas Pride. You can learn more about the Kansas Coaching Academy at <http://www.ksu.edu/cecd/cda>.

## Helpful Resources To Expand a Coach's Knowledge Base

We recommend that every community coach carefully read these books and keep them handy:

### Resources on Coaching as a Practice

- *Masterful Coaching: Extraordinary Results by Impacting People and the Way They Think and Work Together* by Robert Hargrove
- *The Heart of Coaching: Using Transformational Coaching to Create a High-Performance Coaching Culture* by Thomas G. Crane
- *Coaching: Evoking Excellence in Others* by James Flaherty
- *The Handbook of Coaching: A Comprehensive Resource Guide for Managers, Executives, Consultants and Human Resource Professionals* by Frederic M. Hudson, Ph.D.
- *The CCL Handbook of Coaching: A Guide for the Leader Coach* by Sharon Ting and Peter Scisco

### **Resources on Change and Leadership**

- *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* by Peter Senge
- *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler
- *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change* by David Cooperrider and Diana Whitney
- *Community: The Structure of Belonging* by Peter Block
- *The Change Handbook: The Definitive Resource on Today's Best Methods for Engaging Whole Systems* by Peggy Holman, Tom Devane and Steven Cady
- *Leadership from the Inside Out* by Kevin Cashman
- *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* by Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky

### **Additional resources include:**

- Multiple Perspectives Activity to Understand Conflict  
<http://www.change-management-toolbook.com/mod/book/view.php?id=74&chapterid=36>

### ***Facilitating a Timeline Activity***

- Imagining Multiple Futures (Scenario Building)  
[http://forlearn.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guide/3\\_scoping/meth\\_scenario.htm](http://forlearn.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guide/3_scoping/meth_scenario.htm)
- Managing Complex Change  
[http://www.cydjournal.org/Brandeis/smith\\_0322.html](http://www.cydjournal.org/Brandeis/smith_0322.html)
- Mind Mapping  
[http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS\\_01.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS_01.htm)
- Stakeholder Mapping  
[http://changingminds.org/disciplines/change\\_management/stakeholder\\_change/stakeholder\\_mapping.htm](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/change_management/stakeholder_change/stakeholder_mapping.htm)
- Facilitating the Nominal Group Process  
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/tools/decisions/nominal.html>

Several more good concept tools that coaches might integrate during team work sessions or retreats may include:

- Gap Analysis Technique  
[http://4tginc.com/whitepapers/2007/GapAnalysis\\_Final.pdf](http://4tginc.com/whitepapers/2007/GapAnalysis_Final.pdf)
- Appreciative Inquiry  
<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu>
- System Thinking  
[http://www.thinking.net/Systems\\_Thinking/systems\\_thinking.html](http://www.thinking.net/Systems_Thinking/systems_thinking.html)
- Take Charge Too – Community Visioning  
<http://www.soc.iastate.edu/extension/ncrcrd/ncrcrd-rrd182-print.pdf>
- Paradigms/Mental Models  
<http://cnx.org/content/m26227/latest/>
- Gracious Space or The Art of Hosting Community Dialogues  
<http://www.ethicalleadership.org/programs/creating-gracious-space/>
- Community Social Network Mapping  
<http://www.kstoolkit.org/Social+Network+Analysis>







## Chapter 7

# What is the Future of Community Coaching?

Some of you are probably asking if this coaching thing is just another fad. We think not. We base that assessment on the fact that not only is the practice spreading; it is being shaped and adapted by a variety of institutions and practitioners to meet their needs. Community coaching is not a dogma; it does involve some of the best and most cutting edge work related to successful community change. Coaching, for us, reflects the transition from the old model of community development that focused on expert knowledge for problem solving, outside resources and technical support as the vehicle for determining strategies. Community change work around the globe is rapidly leaving this paradigm behind as funders, community development practitioners and communities alike see the value in asset-based approaches leading to locally-developed, owned and implemented solutions. As this paradigm shift has occurred, we have heard a great deal of discussion about the role of the outsider, the community development practitioner, educator or organizer in this new paradigm. Community coaching IS that new role; it will only continue to develop and expand as the new paradigm continues to take hold. As more agencies, consultants and educators adapt the role, we will see more nuanced coaching approaches and better skilled coaching. We will also see communities demanding the coaching approach as they reject the technical advisor with the outsider solution.

In our understanding of effective community change efforts, transformational change that successfully takes on wicked problems such as reducing poverty, addressing equity and access, and lancing the festering sores of racism, sexism, ageism, etc., works because it also builds capacity within the community and thus within individuals, families and clans. These examples of success bring coaching to the center of this work in ways that address social justice and inequalities through relationship building and capacity building. Over and over coaches tell us how relieved communities are that the newcomer will not be giving them another five- or nine-step plan for success or dictate to them what their next step should be. Over and over communities welcome coaching as a way to help them work from where they are to where they want to be. This approach to community change is not about what communities should do; it is about what they can, might and will do. While some may argue that coaching and the rationale for it are way too abstract and complicated, our experience is that communities get it right away because it just makes sense. As one community leader commented, “Citizens need ownership in the process.” Perhaps the most telling indication of how this new paradigm is changing the face of community development work is that communities are excited about this approach and, once engaged with a good coach, they will ask for that type of assistance in the future.

As with most transformational change, consultants and small agencies can more easily change direction. Yet, we are seeing even large organizations, such as Cooperative Extension, begin to make changes in how they work with community. Some examples of how coaching is becoming more a part of community change work include:

- Heartland Center for Leadership Development and the RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship have incorporated coaching into both the HomeTown Competitiveness (<http://www.htccommunity.org/>) (HT Prosperity in Kansas) approach to revitalizing rural communities and the Energizing Entrepreneurs (<http://www.ruraleship.org/>) strategy for rebuilding local and regional economies.
- Cooperative Extension educators in several states have reframed their work in communities as a coaching role. In some states, coaching is explicitly listed as a service available to communities.

- While some of the initial funders of the coaching work do not have any current coaching-related projects, many additional funders, particularly at the state and regional level, are integrating coaching into their strategies to support positive community change.
- Agencies, such as the Iowa Department of Public Health, are training their public health outreach workers in coaching to facilitate effective community approaches to wellness and prevention. Similarly, Iowa Department of Economic Development also uses coaches in the Great Places program.
- Consultants engaged in community change are including a coaching element in their responses to requests for strategic planning and organizational development support.
- Public Allies and other nonprofits focused on youth and intergenerational work are adapting a coaching role to facilitate stronger leadership development programs and more effective action strategies.
- Other nonprofits are beginning to incorporate some coaching-related training in their work with volunteers.
- In Kentucky, the Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute (<http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CLD/KECI/>) trains local leaders and volunteers to provide coaching to both local folks interested in entrepreneurship and those engaged in social entrepreneurship efforts for community betterment.

Yet, those involved in coaching face obstacles in gaining acceptance of this approach within institutions. As one coach working in Cooperative Extension commented, “It’s risky to put coaching in your tenure portfolio.” Similarly, consultants and others who frame a project using coaching run the risk of losing the work because the community does not understand what that means.

Finally, as the field becomes more accepted and understood, we are seeing opportunities for people to get training and to study the coaching approach. In Kansas, cooperative extension has developed a coaching academy for PRIDE communities and their partners to learn how to use a coaching approach as they develop stronger relationships to support each other in the work of community betterment. The on-line Master’s Degree in Community Development has offered a special topics

course on coaching, and the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development has included both online and on-site coaching training in the Foundations for Practice Training Program. Currently, Iowa State University Department of Sociology faculty are working with a number of partners to develop better evaluation strategies and a research protocol to support and strengthen this approach.

For those of you interested in training opportunities related to coaching, we urge you to visit <http://www.communitycoaching.com> or <http://www.communitycoaching.ning.com> to see the opportunities available to you.

We also would appreciate any feedback you have on this field guide and any additions in tips, tales and tools you might have as we update the electronic version.



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## Coaching Assessment Worksheet

The purpose of this assessment tool is to provide you and the project with a way we can evaluate our efforts to develop successful coaching training and models within community development. As we evolve this curriculum and practice, your input will be important to us in creating an effective program and materials.

This assessment tool has three parts. The first part allows you to assess your level of comfort with various behaviors and skills associated with coaching. The second part asks you to map your existing networks, and the third part looks at how you currently use coaching skills and related behaviors and how you see yourself using them in the future.

### Part I: Assessing Coaching-related Skills and Behaviors

Please rate your expertise and comfort with each of the following skills using the following rating scale:

- 1 **NO EXPERIENCE**—Not comfortable and have no experience with this skill.
- 2 **NOVICE**—Have a beginning awareness of the subject area but mostly at the level of abstract concepts and ideas. Apply their skills by following a clear set of rules but can't yet adapt practices to their context.
- 3 **ADVANCED BEGINNER**—Gaining deeper appreciation of the subject area but acknowledge their lack of knowledge about the discipline as a whole. Reliant on well-defined case studies and technical tools as they follow prescribed steps.
- 4 **COMPETENT**—Have familiarity and working experience of full array of knowledge about the subject. Apply tools and principles by adapting practices through careful study and selection among viable alternatives.
- 5 **PROFICIENT**—Have internalized all the key tools and concepts of the field and can reliably apply them in a flexible and fluid manner. Intuitively grasp the whole situation.

Skill/ability	1	2	3	4	5
Generating collaborative conversations					
Applying active listening skills					
Giving constructive feedback					
Uncovering key assumptions in conversation					
Assessing situations to determine appropriate action					
Identifying openings for interventions					
Identifying and accessing resources					
Brokering resources appropriately					
Advocating for inclusive planning processes					
Working with community-based planning processes					
Reflective learning					
Team building skills					
Understanding and applying the ladder of inference (RH 251, 78)					
Observing and understanding group behavior					
Supporting people's ability to work together successfully					
Supporting personal transformations					
Adding value to group interactions					
Perceiving what is of value to others and supporting efforts to support that value					
Facilitating empowering situations					
Getting things done					
Assisting others in setting compelling, urgent goals					
Taking calculated risks					
Acting as a change agent					
Respecting others in relationships					
Understanding process over technique					
Building trust within relationships					
Facilitating opportunities for free and informed choice					
Providing stewardship for groups and projects					
Striving for transformational learning					
Organizing incremental learning					



Skill/ability	1	2	3	4	5
Offering others the opportunity for reflection					
Honoring confidentiality					
Asking for help					
Willingness (openness) to learn					
Willingness to try new things					
Balancing advocacy with inquiry to reduce defensiveness					
Transforming unproductive discussion into quality dialogue					
Assessing project outcomes					
Uncovering unwritten rules					
Listening to discern root causes					
Assessing people's understanding of the current reality					
Helping people be 'self-assisting'					
Exercising patience in conversation					
Thinking creatively					
Being flexible in working with others					
Conversing from a point of neutrality					
Accessing a network of support					
Observing behavior in individuals and groups					
Resolving break downs in communication by remaining unemotional					
Resolving break downs in communication by generating possibilities					
Calling forth a commitment to work with others					
Calling forth key questions and underlying issues					
Crafting teachable moments					
Acting with cultural competency					

Are there any skills or behaviors related to coaching we have missed? Please enter those in the spaces below and rate them accordingly.

Skills/abilities	1	2	3	4	5

Review the list and identify your five greatest strengths:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

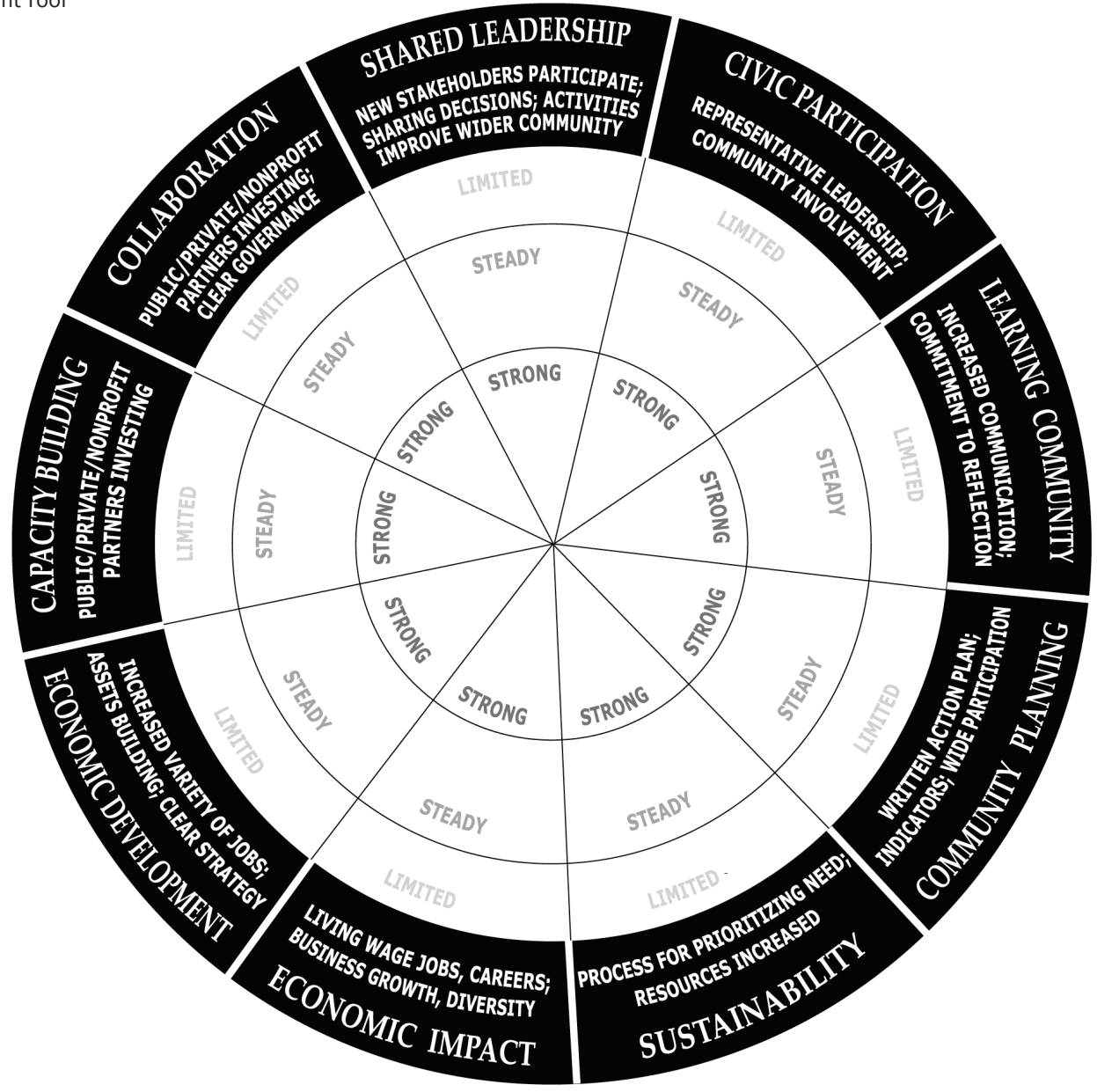
Also identify the five skills you would like to improve.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

How can you use your strengths to help improve other skills?

## MSDI Capacity Assessment Tool

The assessment tool on the following page was used with grassroots groups in the Mississippi Delta. It was also incorporated into MDC's manual, *Building Communities by Design*. Coaches can use this assessment tool to help groups identify their strengths, to develop strategies to use those strengths to create strong capacity all the way around, and to focus on specific capacity-building activities. The tool also helps people understand what capacity is and how they can build it. The tool can be used in a variety of ways: as a whole group discussion, having pairs work together on an element by sharing examples of peak performance and then bringing their work back to the whole group for discussion, or in small groups.



## Using Community Capitals for Asset Mapping

### Introduction

Currently, a number of researchers and practitioners are using the Community Capitals Framework (Flora, Flora and Fey, 2004) in their work. We designed this workbook as a way to share with you various practical applications of the framework in community-based work. We developed the workbook at the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development and tested its applicability with a variety of researchers and field-based specialists in Ames, Iowa, in October 2004. The workbook follows common steps in the planning process: identifying the planning team, identifying assets, focusing on goals and strategies to reach a desired future, and designing a plan for monitoring the plan's impact.

### Focus on Assets

Asset mapping is not new to the field of community development, but using the Community Capitals Framework to direct asset mapping is new. Thus, in addition to presenting strategies for applying the Community Capitals Framework, the activities described in this workbook rely heavily on strength-based approaches to working with communities and organizations.

### Overview of the CCF

Flora, Flora and Fey (2004) developed the Community Capitals Framework as an approach to analyze how communities work. Based on their research to uncover characteristics of entrepreneurial communities, they found the communities that were most successful in supporting healthy sustainable community and economic development paid attention to all seven\* types of capital: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial and built. In addition to identifying the capitals and the role each plays in community economic development, this approach also focuses on the interaction among these seven capitals, as well as investments in one capital that can build assets in others.

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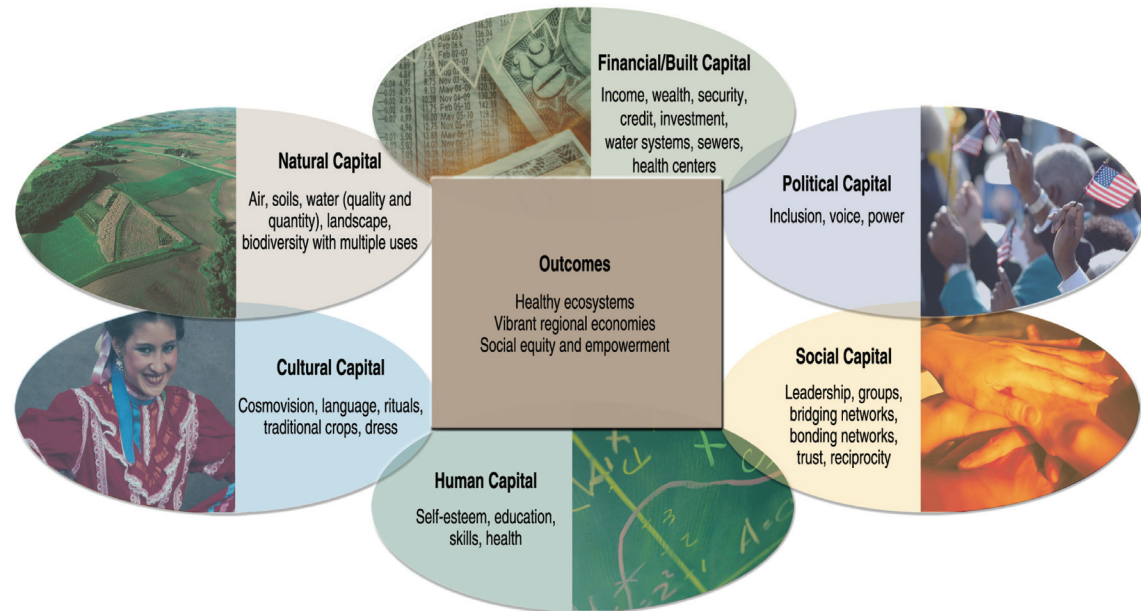
\* Based on recommendations from the Ames working session, we present seven capitals by separating built capital and financial capital.



### What is an asset?

According to the Canadian Rural Partnership:

"Assets are what we want to keep, build upon and sustain for future generations. Assets can be physical things like a building, a local swimming pool or a 150-year-old tree in the town square; assets can also be intangible, like the work that volunteer groups do to beautify the main street or raise funds for the food bank."



## Community Capitals Defined

**Natural capital** refers to those assets that abide in a location, including resources, amenities and natural beauty. Natural capital assets might include parks, farm land and features of the landscape or of nature. For example, Nebraska has invested in its asset of crane migration to build a vigorous tourism effort.

**Cultural capital** reflects the way people “know the world” and how to act within it. Cultural capital also includes the dynamics of who we know and feel comfortable with, what heritages are valued, collaboration across races, ethnicities and generations, etc. Cultural capital influences what voices are heard and listened to, which voices have influence in what areas and how creativity, innovation and influence emerge and are nurtured. Assets related to cultural capital might include ethnic festivals, multi-lingual populations or a strong work ethic. In Roswell, New Mexico, the college invested in their bilingual staff to create a successful mentoring system.

**Human capital** is understood to include the skills and abilities of people to develop and enhance their resources, as well as the ability to access outside resources and bodies of knowledge in order to increase their understanding, identify promising practices and to access data. Human capital also addresses the leadership's ability to "lead across differences," to focus on assets, to be inclusive and participatory, and to be proactive in shaping the future of the community or group. Human capital assets might include a local leadership development program, a high level of educational achievement within the population, or a cluster of skilled craftspeople. At Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, the college provides on-site training in new energy-conscious construction as part of their new building project, thus expanding the human capital available in the region to address the need for energy conservation.

**Social capital** reflects the connections among people and organizations or the social glue to make things happen. **Bonding social capital** refers to those close ties that build community cohesion. In Native villages in Alaska, communities invest their social capital to offer students an elder to mentor them in learning how to apply their new skills and knowledge within the community. **Bridging social capital** involves weak ties that create and maintain bridges among organizations and communities. In Williston, North Dakota, the Extension specialist coaching the college team in their planning process has also been able to link them to a number of state and federal agencies thus expanding their bridging capital to new sources of technical assistance and resources. **Entrepreneurial social capital** mobilizes the capacity of the organization or community to build that capacity as they create change that addresses new opportunities. Also referred to as macroentrepreneurs, these leaders see the assets and understand how to invest them wisely to increase all the capitals. For example, social capital results from the atmosphere of trust among participants, the history of reciprocity defined broadly, and the intensity and reach of networks in which they are involved.

**Political capital** reflects access to power and power brokers. These assets might include a local office of a member of Congress, access to local, county, state or tribal government officials, or leverage with a regional company. For example, in the HomeTown Competitiveness project, project



## An asset becomes capital when it is invested.

A community rich with elders has assets in historical knowledge, a diverse population, and a base of information about the past and wisdom for the future. If a mentoring program is developed with the elders and youth, then the asset is invested, becoming capital.

organizers were able to leverage their political capital to encourage investments in the strategy by utility companies, which in turn promoted foundation interest.

**Financial capital** refers to the financial resources available to invest in community capacity building, to underwrite business development, to support civic and social entrepreneurship, and to accumulate wealth for future community development. Many times financial capital becomes the focus of community efforts. For example, a community may seek grants to replace aging infrastructure. However, in Ord, Nebraska, the community has focused efforts on capturing 10 percent of the expected wealth transfer for this decade to invest in the other capitals by supporting economic development, leadership training and youth entrepreneurship.

**Built capital** refers to the infrastructure that supports the community, such as telecommunications, water and sewer systems, roads, etc. Built capital is often a focus of community development efforts. However, preliminary research indicates that when grants for water, sewers, roads and other projects are given to communities that have not invested in the other capitals, those projects tend to be less successful. For instance, specialists who help rural communities overcome water quality problems often have to start first with helping to develop local leadership.

## Asset Mapping Process

For each of the seven capitals, create a flip chart page with three sections: individuals, associations and institutions. You can have people work on these charts together or in small groups. Another use would be to place the pages in seven parts of the room, divide the group into seven, and assign each small group a capital to work on. Give each group about seven minutes to work on identifying assets. Then, move each group to the next capital and ask them to add ideas. Continue the “walk about” until each group has a chance to work on each capital. You will likely want to decrease the time spent at each station as you go.

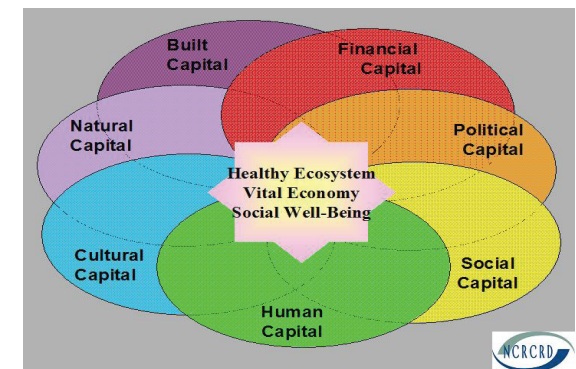


## Mapping Impact Using the Community Capitals Framework

Determining the overall impact of programs presents a challenge to program managers. Often, our narrow program designs can overlook important results that may occur outside the scope of program activities. In order to identify potential indicators of program success, we engage participants and stakeholders in mapping impact using the Community Capitals Framework. This process also allows us to identify potential indicators of success based on the actual program impact in the community.

Cornelia and Jan Flora (2008) developed the Community Capitals Framework as an approach to analyze how communities work. Based on their research to uncover characteristics of entrepreneurial and sustainable communities, they found that the communities most successful in supporting healthy sustainable community and economic development paid attention to all seven types of capital: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial and built.\* In addition to identifying the capitals and the role each plays in community economic development, this approach also focuses on the interaction among these seven capitals as well as how investments in one capital can build assets in others. The seven capitals include natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial and built capital.

- **Natural capital** refers to those assets that abide in a location, including resources, amenities and natural beauty.
- **Cultural capital** reflects the way people know the world and how to act within it. Cultural capital includes the dynamics of who we know and feel comfortable with, what heritages are valued, collaboration across races, ethnicities and generations, etc. Cultural capital influences what voices are heard and listened to, which voices have influence in what areas, and how creativity, innovation and influence emerge and are nurtured. Cultural capital might include ethnic festivals, multi-lingual populations or a strong work ethic.
- **Human capital** includes the skills and abilities of people, as well as the ability to access outside resources and bodies of knowledge in order to increase understanding and to



\* Based on recommendations from the Ames working session, we present seven capitals by separating built capital and financial capital.

identify promising practices. Human capital also addresses leadership's ability to "lead across differences," to focus on assets, to be inclusive and participatory, and to be proactive in shaping the future of the community or group.

- **Social capital** reflects the connections among people and organizations or the social glue to make things happen. **Bonding social capital** refers to those close ties that build community cohesion. **Bridging social capital** involves weak ties that create and maintain bridges among organizations and communities.
- **Political capital** reflects access to power and power brokers, such as access to a local office of a member of Congress, access to local, county, state, or tribal government officials, or leverage with a regional company.
- **Financial capital** refers to the financial resources available to invest in community capacity building, to underwrite businesses development, to support civic and social entrepreneurship, and to accumulate wealth for future community development.
- **Built capital** refers to the infrastructure that supports the community such as telecommunications, industrial parks, mainstreets, water and sewer systems, roads, etc. Built capital is often a focus of community development efforts.

### The Mapping Process

By using the Community Capital Framework (CCF) to focus our inquiry on how our program has made a difference in the community, we can look for outputs (actions, events, programs, etc.), outcomes (how people benefit or not from those actions, events, programs, etc.), and impacts (how systems change as a result of the actions, events, programs, etc.) across the community. For this exercise we will use a technique called Spider graphing or Webbing. Some people also refer to this type of activity as mind mapping. The purpose of the spider graph is to work from a concrete set of actions, such as your program activities (workshops, training, community service), to a more abstract understanding of the situation. Spider graphs can work from the specific to identify either causes or impacts to the more abstract (more people volunteer; students improved their grades as a result, resulting in more successful schools and a higher skilled workforce). For evaluation purposes

we will be working with impacts. To begin, draw a circle in the center of the flip chart paper and write the name of the program or list the activities for which you will be mapping impact. Again, frame the sheet you are working on by listing the seven community capitals around the edge.

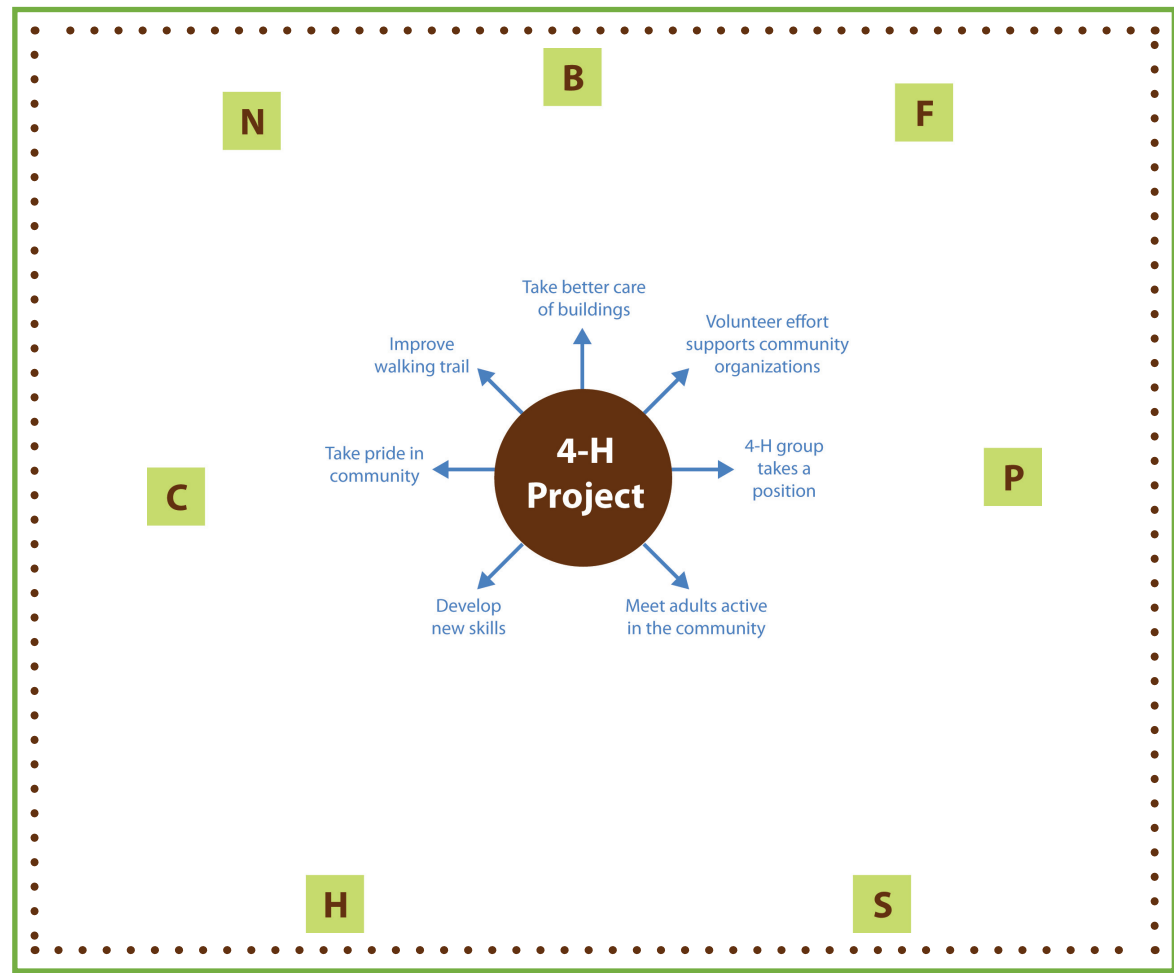
Begin brainstorming the immediate results of the program by listing these items on the flip chart paper in an area corresponding to the appropriate community capital, drawing lines to connect things. That is, how are things different as a result of your strategy? What are people doing differently? Often the items that come up at this stage correspond to outputs and short-term outcomes.

At the second level, invite participants to brainstorm how people “doing things differently” is making a difference by asking who benefits (or does not benefit) from these changes and how. Continue writing up ideas and drawing lines to connect items related to who benefited and how from the activity, or what effect did participation have on attitudes, behaviors, knowledge and action. The last layer focuses on impact, or how are institutions, agencies or systems changing as a result of things being different. Spider graphs provide a fun way to think about a project or activity. No two spider graphs look the same. And, like all planning efforts, spider graphs are messy!

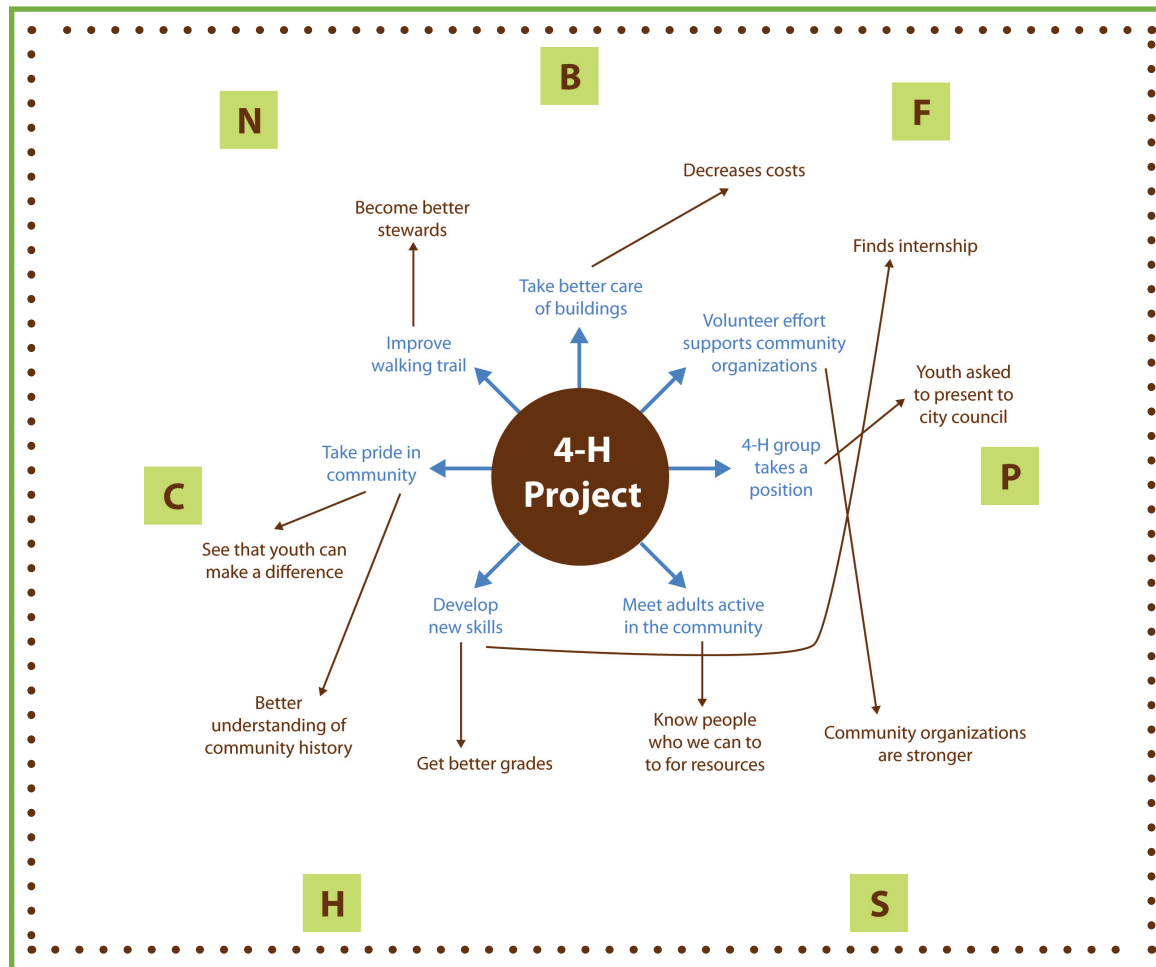
Once the map is completed, participants can identify the most significant changes, networks they have developed that they can continue to work with, and the indicators they want to use to measure progress. Looking at those indicators, they may know of some data that is already being collected and can discuss strategies to collect additional data.

1. To begin, draw a small circle in the center of the flip chart paper and write the name of the program for which you will be mapping impacts. List the capitals around the edge of the paper to frame your mapping process.
2. Group members find a partner and share a story about the activity that most benefited the group or the community.

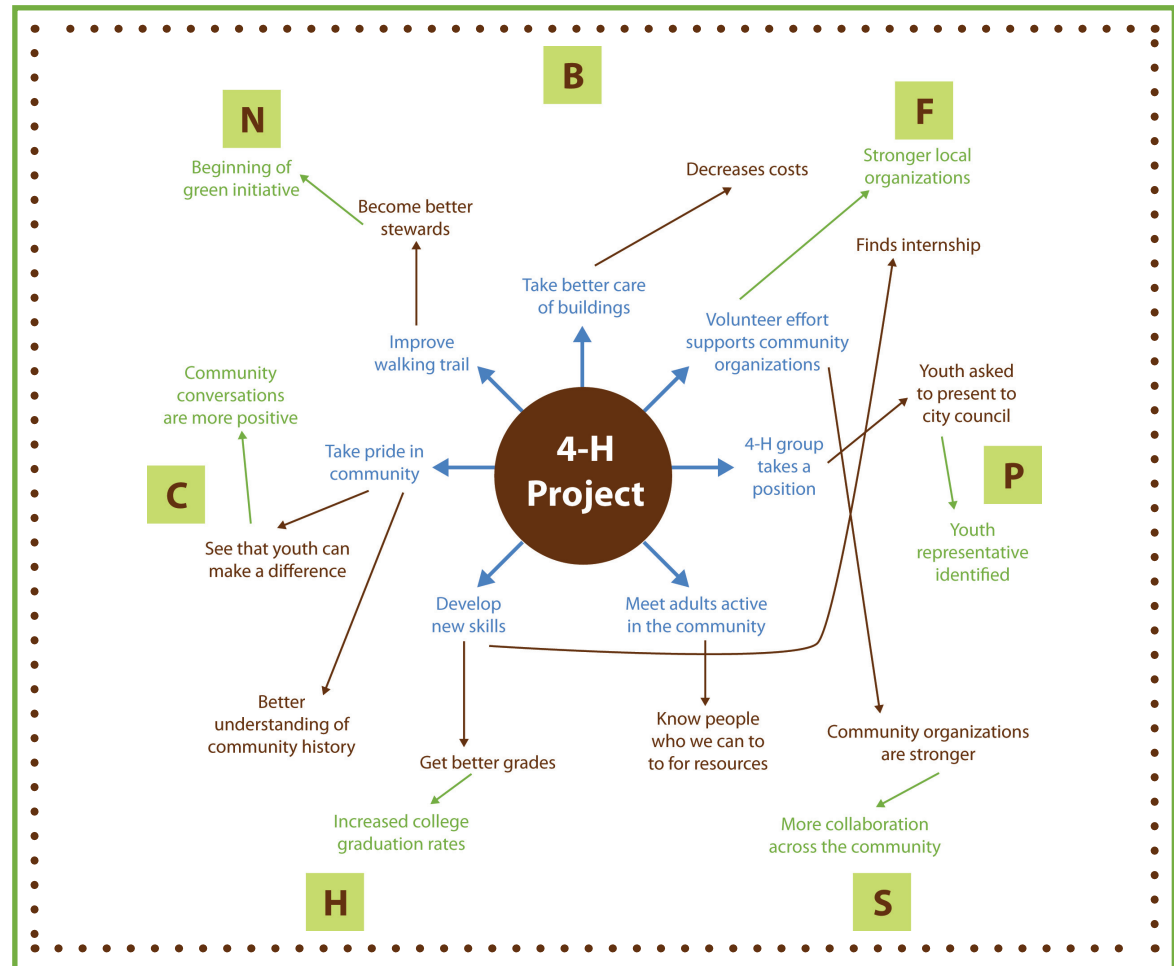
- Examples from the pairs are shared with the group. Note the activity in the center and add the immediate results of the programs and activities, drawing lines to connect things moving toward the relevant capital. Ask questions like: How are things different as a result of your activities? What are people doing differently? What effect did participation have on attitudes, behaviors, knowledge and actions? Continue to brainstorm other results after the initial examples have been shared.



4. At the second level, begin brainstorming what is changing as a result of doing things differently. For example, who benefits from the activity and how has the community changed as a result of the things that people are doing differently? Continue drawing lines to connect items.



5. The last layer, or set of layers, may help answer questions about impact. Map your thoughts about how institutions, agencies or systems have changed as a result of the outcomes you mapped in activities 2 and 3.





6. Once the map is complete, ask the group to identify the most significant change on the map. You can star that item or have the group come up and star them as individuals; sometimes the group will identify several most significant changes.



**Possible additional activities:**

7. Do some more evaluation: Looking at the changes you decided were most significant, who else can give a perspective on this to help tell the story? For example, maybe a community leader could be interviewed by youth members about the impact of this work on the community.
8. Plan future actions that build on the impacts and new relationships you have mapped.
9. What stakeholders can you share this information with? What do they want to know and how can you share it?





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